



JAIL FOR DRUGS IN TUNNELS

Report by James Fisher

A FATHER-of-four from Brierley Hill involved in a cannabis factory discovered in a historic network of tunnels near Stourbridge has been jailed for two-and-a-half years.

Jason Whiley had denied growing more than 800 cannabis plants in a section of the sprawling Drakelow Tunnels, located deep underground at Kingsford Country Park near Kinver.

But a jury found him guilty of being concerned in the production of cannabis with a street value of about £650,000. Whiley was given a jail sentence of two-and-a-half years at Hereford Crown Court last week. Whiley, of Thorns Avenue, had claimed he had been employed as a labourer by a friend to clear rubbish and debris from the tunnels, which were first opened during the early 1940s as a top secret complex and were designated a



Jason Whiley — behind bars

Borough is top in region for recycling

DUDLEY are the region's recycling champs with more and more families recycling their waste.

Dudley led the way in the entire West Midlands with its recycling rate up from 35.6 per cent in 2013/14 to 42.2 per cent in 2014/15.

Walsall also improved from 41.1 per cent to 42 per cent but Sandwell's rate fell from 44.6 per cent to 40.9 per cent and Wolverhampton from 45.5 per cent to 44.1 per cent. Across the region, the average waste recycling rate was 42.4 per cent.

England as a whole saw rates improve from 44.5 per cent to 44.7 for the year to the end of March.

Chief executive of recycling business Suez, David Palmer-Jones, said the UK has a target of reaching the 50 per cent European Union benchmark by 2020.

He added: "For the UK to achieve its agreed EU target of 50 per cent recycling rates for household waste, England has to improve its performance."

The West Midlands ranked seventh out of nine English regions for recycling with Birmingham having the lowest rate in the region at 26.6 per cent, down from 28.7 per cent.

Demolition teams move in at pub site

DEMOLITION teams have moved on to the site of a boarded up landmark pub in Dudley as work is about to start on tearing down the building to make way for a supermarket.

The King Arthur will be replaced by a new Aldi store in the new year.

The 1930s pub, at the junction of Birmingham new Road and Priory Road, will be flattened over the coming weeks.

Workers on site say they expect demolition of the roadhouse style pub, which failed to get support as a heritage building, will start by this week.

Demolition workers have been on site removing last remaining fixtures from inside the pub which closed in 2012.

Since its closure it has been plagued by vandalism and an arson attack causing concerns for residents living nearby.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin surveyed 900 people in the area when plans surfaced for the new supermarket and he found that eight out of ten people supported plans for a supermarket.

Supermarket bosses say the new 1,000 sq ft store will create 40 jobs.

nuclear bunker during the Cold War.

The 41-year-old had denied the charges after he was arrested by police who raided a section of the tunnels, which in total cover about 250,000 sq ft and span three-and-a-half miles, in November 2013.

Whiley had claimed he had been asked to clear out the tunnel in March of the same year by a friend — who he refused to name — and had spent seven or eight days removing breeze blocks and other detritus.

But he said he had no involvement in cultivating the hundreds of cannabis plants that were discovered by police at various stages of growth.

Police said it would have cost several thousands of pounds to purchase all of the equipment to grow the cannabis.

Fortified

Officers forced their way into the tunnels through a fortified metal door and then discovered another door behind which lay an area split into rooms where the plants were growing.

The plants in the main room were found under specialist lighting on timers to ensure they had the right amount of light. They uncovered 564 mature cannabis plants in a main growing room in the tunnels. A further 321 immature cannabis plants were discovered split in two further rooms.

Whiley's fingerprints had been found on plastic sheeting and equipment by police during the raid.

He had admitted seeing plant pots, compost bags and other implements in a section of the tunnels but said it wasn't his 'business to know' what the equipment was being used for.

Mr Timothy Sapwell, prosecuting, said that Whiley watered the cannabis plants and set up woodwork inside the tunnels.

Comic says this gong is for his home town



Not bad for a Dudley lad — A laughing Sir Lenny delighted after receiving his knighthood from the Queen at Windsor Castle

Arise Sir Lenny

IT'S Dudley's knight — Sir Lenny Henry, comedian and actor, was all smiles as he received a knighthood from the Queen and dedicated it to the people of Dudley.

The Dudley-born Comic Relief co-founder was recognised for services to drama and charity.

He also dedicated the honour to anyone who had been involved with the charity in its 30 years.

After being honoured by the Queen at Windsor Castle on Friday, the 57-year-old said: "It's just an extraordinary thing."

He said it was a 'huge thing' for all those involved in Comic Relief and anyone who had anything to do with his progress.

"It's a wonderful honour, it's for them and the people of Dudley and my family."

Sir Lenny joked if he ever fell in a canal while wearing his weighty medal, he would be 'going down'.

He added: "I'm a working-class kid from Dudley. I was born in very lowly circumstances, so for me to be here is a huge honour and completely unimaginable."

BILLS

Thousands having to pay more council tax

THOUSANDS of families in Dudley will have to pay bigger council tax bills after changes put forward by council chiefs were approved at a meeting.

Vulnerable groups, low earners, single people and students who currently benefit from the council tax reduction scheme face paying more.

The changes could affect up to 9,815 households in Dudley.

Councillors at the cash-strapped authority supported plans for all working age households to pay at least 20 per cent of their council tax.

ACCUSED

Six fans are facing charges after attack

SIX teenagers accused of an attack after a Wolves match that left a Watford fan in a coma will appear before a court on January 18.

Daniel Lloyd, of Longfellow Road, Dudley; Joseph Lister, of Palmer Close, Wednesfield; Ryan Meer, of Watling Street, Gailey — all aged 18 — appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court alongside Robert Beech, 19, of Springhill Road, Wednesfield; and two younger boys all accused of wounding with intent. All were granted conditional bail.

DEATH

Pensioner hit by two cars is named

A PENSIONER who died after being hit by a car was named by police after it emerged he was struck by a second vehicle as he lay in the road.

Leslie Marks, aged 66, was crossing Amblecote High Street at the junction with Brettell Lane when he was struck by a red Vauxhall Corsa. A man aged 25 was arrested and released on bail. Police said Mr Marks, from Wordsley, was hit by a second vehicle, a black 4x4 type, as he lay in the road and that vehicle did not stop.

The tragedy happened on November 29 at around 6.50pm. Call 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

INSIDE

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Danger driver dived from moving car

A DANGEROUS driver led police on a high-speed chase through a residential area before diving from the vehicle as it moved in a bid to escape, a court heard.

The car came to a stop on a grass verge – before Craig Stanway, who had a small amount of cannabis in the vehicle, was found by police more than 40 minutes later.

Stanway, of High Street, in Sedgley, pleaded guilty to dangerous driving and driving without insurance at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

The 30-year-old had claimed he was struggling with kidney failure and was trying to get away from his ex-partner's boyfriend.

Prosecution barrister Mr Robert Price said police spotted Stanway driving the Ford Focus in Dudley erratically on May 8 at around 12.51am.

"He was driving down Himley Road, which is a 30mph road, at around 60-70mph on the wrong side of the carriageway. It was described by police as a quiet road.

"As police closed in he tried once to jump out of the vehicle while it was still moving, before trying again and succeeding. He made no attempt to put the handbrake on and the car continued rolling forward, mounting the pavement and coming to a halt in a grass verge.

"A number of police were deployed to try and

find him, and a helicopter was sent out." He added that a small amount of cannabis was found in the car.

Stanway broke down in tears in court. He said: "I'm disgusted with myself, I can't apologise enough. I just made a mistake."

Sarah Allen, defending, said: "At the time of the incident he thought he was being chased by his ex-partner's boyfriend."

He was sentenced to seven months imprisonment, suspended for 12 months, disqualified from driving, given a 12-month community order and a rehabilitation requirement of 20 days. He was also put on a curfew between 9pm-6am..

New avenue of trees bid to honour war heroes

DOZENS of trees are set to line a main road in Cosely as part of plans to revive a tradition which honours local heroes of the First World War.

Dudley Council is planning to plant more than 60 trees along the Birmingham New Road.

They have been working with a number of partners to fund the project, including The Canals and Rivers Trust and Holden's Brewery.

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho described it as a 'fantastic idea'.

He said: "It's not something you hear of every day and it will be a fantastic addition to the rich heritage and patriotism we have here in Dudley."

In 1928 a line of trees known as Cosely's Avenue of Remembrance was planted and dedicated to commemorate the 350 men from the area who gave their lives in the 1914-1918 war.

Kingswinford Royal British Legion branch secretary Fred Gorman said: "It sounds like an absolutely fantastic idea. The centenary was last year so it's very moving that soldiers of the First World War are being remembered in this way."

"I'm originally from Cosely so personally I feel it is a very touching gesture by the council."

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, added: "These trees will be a fantastic welcome for people as they arrive in Dudley borough and I am really looking forward to seeing this project grow."

Each tree will have a plaque bearing the name of the person it is dedicated to.

Mosque land battle to cost council £40k

CASH-STRAPPED Dudley Council is to pay £40,000 to Dudley Muslim Association to buy back land subject to a decade-long battle over a proposed mosque.

Council bosses have decided to hand over the sum in order to regain ownership of the site in Hall Street. They hope the money will then be recouped by selling the land.

The saga over the plans to build the mosque was brought to an end last month when appeal judges ruled in favour of the council's bid to seize back the land.

The amount owed by the council would have been much higher but the DMA was ordered to contribute £114,000 towards the council's legal costs following the hearing.

Dudley Council is currently trying to find £20 million worth of savings over the next three years. Finances bosses said the £40,000 bill would be met from its capital budget.

Transferred

They expect to have the land back in its ownership in January and said they anticipate there being some 'site issues' to address before the site is put on the market.

A report by the council's chief executive, Sarah Norman, and council strategic director, Philip Tart, said: "The DMA was ordered to pay a contribution to the council's legal costs amounting to £114,451.30 and the Hall Street land has to be transferred to the council by January 22, 2016. At the same time, the council has to pay to the DMA the purchase price of approximately £155,000. Therefore, the net sum payable by the council to the DMA will be approximately £40,000.

The authority spent more than £200,000 on legal costs battling the mosque bid, which proved to be controversial in the town and sparked five demonstrations by far-right groups. More than 80,000 people signed petitions against plans for the mosque, which would have replaced Castle Hill's Dudley Central Mosque.

Council leader Peter Lowe said the council had offered to help DMA find a suitable site for a new mosque, after the association said it had outgrown the Castle Hill premises and that 'door will be open to them should they wish to proceed'.

Adam's pie is pork of the town



Proud – butcher Adam Lang, of Wollaston, with a tray full of his award-winning Darters Delight pork pies

A CREATIVE butcher has returned from a national competition with the overall champion pie crown after wowing judges.

Adam Lang, who runs Langs of Wollaston, in Stourbridge, beat off strong competition to claim eight golds at the English Winter Fair. The 38-year-old from Sedgley used special ingredients to claim the top prizes for his New Yorker, Christmas Cracker and Darter's Delight, which claimed the overall title.

The annual event, run by Staf-

fordshire and Birmingham Agricultural Society, took place at the Staffordshire County Showground.

Mr Lang said: "Our shop is very much a family affair and we've been based here for six years now. More and more people seem to be coming back to butchers and it's nice to get some rewards for all our hard work."

"I was up until 11pm the night before the show and then 4am the following morning getting everything ready."

The seasonal Christmas Cracker included a layer of sausage meat, stuffing, turkey breast, ox tongue and cranberry sauce.

One of the secret ingredients in the New Yorker was a layer of gherkins and the Darter's Delight included three layers of pork pie meat either side of mature cheese and black pudding.

Golds were also handed out for the more traditional steak and kidney, Malvern Gold pork pie and three types of sausage.

Workshop to give tree dressing tips

A WORKSHOP has been organised to give people tips on how to dress a Christmas tree.

Members of Cradley Heath Creative are holding the drop-in workshop at Mary MacArthur Gardens in Cradley Heath on Saturday between 11am and 3pm.

The workshop will be held in Cradley Heath Creative's Oss Box and there will be materials such as card, paper, fabric, glue and string for people to get creative with.

The workshop is a collaboration between Cradley Heath Creative and the Friends of Mary MacArthur Gardens, with input from Jangchub Ling Buddhist Centre and the Community Champion at Asda, Netherton.

Singers in concert at Sedgley church

A SEDGLEY church choir will be performing a festive concert.

St Andrew's Singers will present Waiting for Christmas at the Bilston Street church on Saturday from 7.30pm. Tickets for the show are available on the door for £5.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Glassboys' FA Cup dreams shattered

STOURBRIDGE fans were left disappointed after the side crashed out of the FA Cup at the weekend.

The Glassboys lost 2-0 at home to Eastleigh on Saturday. Gary Hackett's side were hoping to get the win and make it through to the third round of the competition where Premier League sides enter. Despite the loss, many fans said they were still proud.

Nick Baker, aged 57 from Amblecote, said: "I'm obviously disappointed but I thought we matched them all over the park for the majority of the game."

Park parties to bring in money

A DUDLEY town centre park is playing host to two Christmas fun day to raise money for charity.

The Christmas Network events in Priory Park, off Priory Road, are running from noon to 8pm on Saturday and Sunday.

The weekend is raising money for Ronald McDonald House Charities, which provide accommodation for families with children in hospital.

There will be a chance to visit Santa in his grotto as the free event where there will be a fun fair, stalls and a fancy dress competition.

Wedding venue to be sold at auction

A VENUE in Dudley that has been used for weddings and conferences is going under the hammer at a property auction in Birmingham today (Thu).

The Prince Banqueting Suite in Martin Hill Street has a guide price of £625,000 to £650,000 for CP Bigwood's auction in the Holte Suite at Aston Villa's Villa Park ground.

Also to be sold are The Coach House, The Mews and former stables on Bridgnorth Road, Stourton. The auction starts at 11am.

Event for those who face Christmas alone

A CHRISTMAS Day celebration event is being held in Dudley for people who would otherwise be spending the day alone.

Black Country Housing Group has teamed up with Creative Support and Dudley Advocacy to run the event, which will feature a buffet, games and quizzes, in the Savoy Centre in Northfield Road, from noon until 3pm.

The free event is open to adult from across the borough and transport is being organised from Stourbridge and Halesowen. Call 07580 969368.

Watercolours on show

ARTIST Martin Poole is holding an exhibition of his watercolour paintings in Dudley town centre. The work by the Tipton artist is featured in the Artspace premises in Birdcage Walk until Thursday, December 19, from 10am to 4pm Thursday and Friday and 11am to 4pm on Saturdays.

Landmark is likely to be demolished in new year

DUDLEY Hippodrome could be demolished early in the new year after councillors backed controversial plans to knock down the former theatre.

They want the building removed 'at the earliest opportunity' despite pleas from campaigners and opposition councillors.

But there will be a consultation period and the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group has been given until the end of the month to put together a realistic proposition for taking it over. A final decision is expected in January.

The controlling Labour group reiterated its stance when Dudley Council met but came under pressure from opposition councillors, who called on them to support the plan to restore the 1930s building, while the open space proposals were derided as 'glorified pavements'.

The Theatre Trust has also sent a letter to the council, pleading with bosses save the Hippodrome due to its cultural significance.

Development boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "Despite what has been suggested to the contrary, there has been no agenda on the council's part to demolish this building come what may. Over the last three years the council has been true to its word in terms of inviting and assessing proposals to establish whether there was a viable future for this building."

"Without a revised proposal we think, in the current financial climate, it is no longer affordable to bear the cost of this building with no realistic chance of moving forward."

PM reception for NHS staff

HEALTH and care staff from Dudley attended a special reception hosted by Prime Minister David Cameron at 10 Downing Street.

The visit was part of a new partnership that aims to transform the future of the NHS.

The All Together Better Partnership will see health and social care in Dudley transformed, with a new model allowing patients to access specialist care out of hospital.

Dudley is one of just 50 pioneering sites helping to deliver the five-year forward view, the national vision for the future of health services.

Janet Beddows, lead nurse for the project, and Paul Maubach, chief executive officer of Dudley CCG, joined NHS colleagues at the event.

Songsters lead charity concert

KINGSWINFORD'S Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir will be joined by Sovereign Brass and choir of Ashwood Park Primary School, Wordley, for its Christmas charity concert on Saturday at Dudley Town Hall.

Backing agreed on move to protect pubs

A PROPOSAL demanding the protection of landmark pubs in Dudley has been supported by councillors.

Now campaigners seeking to protect pubs in the borough can ask that they are classed as an 'asset of community value' under Government legislation.

Groups trying to halt developments of pubs such as the Seven Stars in Sedgley and the Haden Cross Inn in neighbouring Cradley Heath have already used the ACV status.

Dudley Conservative group members won support at a council meeting for ACV to be taken into account before any planning permission is granted.

Legislation says that councils have to decide whether ACV can be considered by officials if a

change-of-use application is submitted. Councillor Simon Phipps tabled the motion. He claims this will protect pubs which have been subject to moves by big-money developers to transform them into supermarkets.

Policy

Dudley Council has already launched a wider review of planning policy which is due to report back to cabinet members next year.

But Councillor Phipps says that action was needed sooner to protect pubs in the short term. He said: "I proposed this motion to speed up what needs to be done by the council. We have lost many pubs and other assets of community value while the

council has been out consulting. Something needs to be done now."

"I can't help but feel the council have dragged their feet over this, but ACVs for Dudley will mean pubs will have additional protection."

The motion was agreed unanimously by council members.

UKIP group members in Dudley had sought similar assurances to protect landmark boozers from redevelopment when they tabled a motion to a meeting of the full council in December 2014.

Government ministers introduced the ACV status in legislation after communities claimed they were losing amenities and buildings of great importance to them.

Nurse struck off after hiding attack on ex

A NURSE who throttled his former girlfriend and then tried to hide his assault conviction from his bosses at a Dudley hospital has been kicked out of the profession.

James Kearsey grabbed his ex-partner by the throat at her home in Lancashire in 2013, a hearing was told.

Kearsey, who worked at Russells Hall Hospital, left the woman with bruising to her neck.

The hearing was told he failed to inform both hospital chiefs and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) of his conviction for seven months.

The NMC was told that his former partner reported the incident to police who arrested Kearsey on July 12, 2013. He denied committing the offence in interview, suggested he had been acting in self-defence and flatly refuted the assault in Blackpool. He later told his employers he had actually assaulted a male.

After initially pleading not guilty at Dudley Magistrates Court on October 17, 2013, he was convicted of assault by beating the following January. He was sentenced to a 12-month community order including 150 hours of unpaid work, a supervision activity requirement and a structured intervention to address domestic abuse workbook. A five-year restraining order was also made and he was ordered to pay £500 compensation and costs.

Referred

The matter was referred to the NMC last July and they notified Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust of their concerns.

A disciplinary hearing was convened last December which resulted in Kearsey's dismissal.

NMC panel chairman Wendy Yeadon said: "Mr Kearsey failed to notify his employer and the NMC of his conviction over a period of seven months. Moreover, when questioned about his conviction during the investigatory meeting, Mr Kearsey made a deliberate decision to give a fabricated account of events which he knew to be misleading."

"Registered nurses occupy a position of privilege and trust in society and are expected at all times to be professional. Patients and their families must be able to trust registered nurses with their lives and lives of their loved ones."

Kearsey, who was not present or represented, was struck off the nursing register with an 18-month interim ban. Kearsey does have an opportunity to appeal the decision.

Four injured in early-hours crash



The wreckage of the car after a crash which left four people injured, with three cut free by firefighters

FOUR people were injured, one seriously, in a two-car crash in Cradley Heath in the early hours of Sunday morning. The incident happened in Tinsley Avenue at around 1.40am.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman John Hawker said: "Three people were trapped in one car with one man having

suffered serious injuries. All three received treatment whilst they were extricated from the vehicle with the assistance of the fire service."

"One man, believed to be in his 20s, suffered multiple serious injuries and received trauma care at the scene. "Treatment continued as he was transferred by ambu-

lance to Queen Elizabeth Hospital."

A man and a woman both suffered minor injuries and received treatment at the scene before being taken to Russells Hall Hospital. The man driving the second car received treatment for minor injuries and was taken by ambulance to Sandwell Hospital.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



ONE of the outstanding moments of the Commons debate on whether to bomb Syria was the short, straightforward speech by Dan Jarvis, reminding us that this plain-speaking 43-year-old ex-soldier would make a formidable Labour Party leader. There is still time.

CAMPAIGNERS claim that two curry restaurants in Britain close every week because of a shortage of trained chefs from the Indian sub-continent. The answer, they insist, is to relax UK migration rules to allow in more skilled chefs. Their argument is that only Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Kashmiri-born cooks could possibly have the necessary skills. What a load of bunkum. For a start, this argument is vaguely racist. Imagine the fury if anyone suggested that only somebody born in England could cook fish and chips, or that haggis-stuffing jobs were reserved exclusively for Scotsmen. Secondly, if the restaurants raised their wages, they might have less difficulty recruiting staff. It's hardly surprising there's a shortage of chefs if restaurant owners continue to exclude half the available population. When did you last see a female chef in a curry house?

IS anyone surprised that scrapping the vehicle tax disc has been followed by a doubling in the number of untaxed cars on the road to more than half a million? If you make it easy to get away with tax dodging, people will dodge taxes. Does anyone in Whitehall have a brain?

A FRIEND is hobbling around and popping ibuprofen. Why is it that all the conditions we used to laugh about in Les Dawson's comedy routines – gout, bunions, lumbago and sciatica – are so damn painful in real life?

A LABOUR MP says it's time to find a gender-neutral word to replace "fisherman." She is promptly deluged with suggestions including "fish stranglers" and "fisherdukes." My favourite so far is "cod-botherers."

A READER says the sadness and solemnity of recent events have been spoiled by the computer-generated news subtitles on his TV. "Paris attacks" appeared as "Parrot attacks," "Charles de Gaulle" as "Sure other goal" and "responsibility" as "portability." He was fascinated to read that it was "not possible to burn from 30,000 feet." Bomb, apparently.

MEANWHILE, over on Channel 5. 11.40am, Film: Annie Claus is Coming to Town. 1.30pm, Film: The Christmas Shepherd. 3.10pm, Film: Finding Mrs Claus. 5.10pm, Film: Christmas in Conway. All together, now: It's beginning to feel a lot like overkill.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Hospital admissions have rocketed

THE number of patients being admitted to hospital has rocketed by more than 30,000 in the Black Country and Staffordshire over the last year.

Bosses say an increase in the elderly population is to blame — along with an over-reliance on Accident & Emergency departments by people who are not seriously ill or hurt.

The number of admissions across

the Black Country and Staffordshire has increased at all NHS trusts except two – Sandwell and West Birmingham, and Walsall.

The total went from 548,828 in 2013-14 to 580,758 in the following year.

The Dudley Group of Hospital NHS Trust's increased from 109,068 to 117,043. Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust saw a rise from 106,396

to 117,178, while Staffordshire's went up from 157,605 to 178,710.

But Sandwell's dropped from 107,499 to 103,361, and from 68,260 to 64,466 in Walsall.

Care

Latest figures from the Health and Social Care Information Centre show 15.9 million admissions to NHS hospitals in England in 2014-15,

equivalent to 43,500 per day. This is 1,200 more per day on average than in 2013-14 and 10,400 more per day on average than 10 years ago in 2004-05.

The latest analysis shows an increase of 2.8 per cent (430,400) in hospital admissions from 2013-14 – 15.5m in total – and an increase of 31.3 per cent, or 3.8m, in hospital admissions from 2004-05.

Traders forced to sell land for road scheme

By James Driver-Fisher

A SANDWICH shop, supermarket and car wash will be forced to sell part of their land to make way for a road widening scheme in Pensnett.

They are among several businesses in Pensnett that are being forced to sell some of their land, including their car parks, as part of the multi-million pound plan.

Dudley Council wants to buy 22 pieces of land so it can widen the High Street near Russells Hall Hospital to create a dual carriageway.

Dudley Council will use compulsory purchase powers to drive the scheme through.

Businesses that have been served orders for part of their land include Abercarn Nursing Home, Sainsbury's Local, AA Professional Hand Car Wash and Valeting Centre, Austins Barber Shop, The Loaf Sandwich Bar, Famous House Chinese takeaway and Odettes Dance Sport.

Teg Chohan, who has run Loaf in High Street for five years, said he was planning to emigrate to Canada but was worried the changes could affect selling his business.

Avoid

He said: "There were roadworks not so long ago and everything was chock-a-block. People will avoid the area if that happens again."

"I also deliver to a lot of the trading estates around here who want their food at a certain time. They want their food hot too and not cold."

He added: "I have six parking spaces but that could be cut down. Sometimes the car park is full, especially on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, which are my busiest days."

"They've mentioned compensation but will they give it me when I need it. I am only the lease holder too so I won't even get any of the council money. I'm hoping to move to Canada with my family but this could scupper my plans. I could be stuck here."

The work, which will take a year and could start by January 2017, will also see traffic lights introduced on junctions at High Oak and Tansey Green Road.

The widening of the junction with High Oak will see the adjoining Bradley Street closed to through traffic. The cost will be partly funded by a £3.8m award from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

Dudley councillor Ken Finch called it a much-needed road improvement. He said: "I personally would approve anything that helps sort the problems in that area."

The High Street, used by 30,000 vehicles a day, also serves Pensnett Trading Estate, the largest secured trading estate in Europe.



Owner of sandwich shop Loaf, Teg Chohan, is not happy with the impact of road widening on his business

Taxi driver used a fake licence to avoid points

A TAXI driver who used a fake driving licence to avoid incurring penalty points has been put behind bars.

Afra Sihab, of Apollo Road, Wollescote, told the authorities he had not been driving his hackney carriage when it was caught speeding on two separate occasions.

Fearing he could be disqualified from driving, he claimed the driver had been a Mohammed Afra Sihab and used a fake driving licence in that name to accumulate speeding points. Prosecutor Mr Robert Edwards told a hearing at Wolverhampton Crown Court that no such person existed.

Sihab, 52, was sentenced to eight months in prison and disqualified from driving for 12 months having admitted two counts of perverting the course of justice. The father-of-four was ordered to pay £400 costs.

The authorities eventually caught up with Sihab after he was stopped by police on June 20 this year. Officers found the fake licence in his car.

Defending Alisha Harris said: "He is frankly mortified as what he has done and his family are ashamed."

She explained that he had since left the taxi trade. "He is running the Kings fast food shop in Stourbridge and says business is doing well," she added.

But Judge Robin Onions told him: "These are offences of the greatest seriousness. In my view you do not regret what you have done. People like you who try and avoid justice by deliberate acts of deception will be treated by the courts with some severity."

Auschwitz book by ex-council worker

A FORMER Dudley Council employee has released a new book on Auschwitz.

Perry Buck's Auschwitz: The Complete Guide gives an in-depth historical account of the notorious Nazi death camp. It also acts as a travel guide to the Auschwitz museum and its surroundings in modern-day Poland.

Mr Buck, aged 43, from Birmingham, is already an author of a top-selling travel guide to the Holy Land.

He is due to give a number of talks at local schools in the run up to Holocaust Memorial Day in January.

Mr Buck, who worked for the council as a communications manager, said: "This is an important subject and one I have been writing about for more than two decades."

Thieves steal tools and wire from home

THIEVES stole tools and electrical wire from a home in Romsley during renovation. They targeted the property in Old House Lane between 3pm on November 28 and 8.30am the next day. Call police on 101 or anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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Experiment is out of this world for pupils

A GROUP of school pupils in Dudley are tackling a gardening experiment that is out of this world – by growing seeds from outer space.

Roberts Primary School, in Lower Gornal, which is home of Dudley Environment Zone, is taking part in the science project.

In September, 2kg of seeds – rather aptly being rocket seeds – were flown to the International Space Station on Soyuz 44S where they will be spending several months before returning to Earth in March 2016.

The seeds have been sent as part of Rocket Science, an educational project launched by the Royal Horticultural Society Campaign for School Gardening and the UK Space Agency.

Roberts Primary, in Roberts Street, is one of up to 10,000 schools to receive a packet of 100 seeds from space, which they will observe growing alongside regular terrestrial seeds.

Future

Pupils will be tasked with measuring the difference in growth between the two sets of seeds over a seven week period.

It is hoped that the project will inspire pupils to think more about how human life could be preserved on another planet in the future

Gwyn Lucas, who is head of year five, said: "This experiment is a fantastic way of teaching our pupils to think more scientifically and share their findings with the whole school and community."

Help is at hand for the homeless

PEOPLE at risk of having to sleep rough this winter are being offered a helping hand by Dudley Council.

The authority's homeless prevention and response team offers help to find short-term accommodation.

The team will look at emergency housing solutions and work with people to resolve their longer term needs.

Dudley Council has worked with Midland Heart to provide Saltbrook Place in Lye, which opened in April. It includes accommodation plus on-site dog kennels.

Dudley housing boss Councillor Gave Partridge said: "This service plays a vital role. Although the official number of rough sleepers in Dudley is relatively low, we are aware that 'sofa surfing' occurs in the borough."

Guns N' Roses star cancels gig

GILBY Clarke has cancelled an upcoming gig at the Robin 2 in Bilston.

The 53-year-old guitarist, who was in top rock band Guns N' Roses, was due to play on Monday. Contact the venue box office on 01902 401211.

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Help airport extension take off – MP



Ian Austin MP

AN MP has called upon the Government to invest in expansion of Birmingham Airport in a bid to boost the West Midlands economy. Dudley North MP Ian Austin told the Commons that money should not be purely focused on being spent at Gatwick and Heathrow and that boosting capacity at Birmingham Airport would bring more jobs and businesses to the region including Shropshire, taking pressure off "overheated" London and the South East.

It follows a report from the Airports Commission, which called for increasing airport capacity in the country to meet demand. The Government is now considering the report's

recommendations to expand either Heathrow or Gatwick to deliver more flights.

Speaking in a debate on the commission's report, Mr Austin said: "There's no reason why airport capacity, and the jobs and investment that come with it, have to be concentrated in London and the South East.

"If the Government is serious about devolution let's invest in regional airports like Birmingham that's already contributing £1 billion to the economy and within two hours' drive for 35 million people.

"Investment in regional airports like Birmingham is the best way to increase capacity."

Birmingham Airport saw a record 921,150 passengers pass through its terminals during October beating the previous record last year by 4.8 per cent.

It was the ninth record month for passengers this year and long-haul traffic was at the forefront of growth. Birmingham Airport saw a record 921,150 passengers during October, beating the previous record last year by 4.8 per cent.

October was the ninth record month for passengers this year and long-haul traffic is at the forefront of the growth with more than 33 per cent more passengers using these services compared to October 2014.

Above average rating for borough primary schools

EDUCATION chiefs in Dudley have welcomed figures placing the borough above the national average for the quality of its primary schools.

Ofsted's annual report ranks Dudley in joint 59th place in the country out of 150 local authorities, with 87 per cent of children going to good or outstanding schools.

The figure marks a rise of one per cent from 2013/14 and represents a three per cent increase in the number of better performing schools in the borough. It also means Dudley is outperforming the rest of the Black Country areas and Staffordshire in the quality of its primary education.

Councillor Ian Cooper, Dudley Council's cabinet member for children's services, said: "We are continually striving to build on the successes in our schools and bring about further improvements wherever possible.

"We have made significant strides in a number of areas, as a result, the percentage of primary schools that are good or better is now 87 per cent, which is better than the national picture.

"A wide range of work has included linking schools together to improve specific areas of the curriculum, such as maths, and we have developed a far reaching school improvement strategy to drive standards up further.

Aspiration

"We will continue to work with schools to deliver our aspiration that all schools in Dudley are good or outstanding."

The Ofsted ratings of secondary schools in Dudley also improved this year with 63 per cent of pupils now attending schools within the top two gradings, a rise of eight per cent. However, although the authority has moved up four places in the national table, it is still languishing in 123rd position for secondary schools.

Elsewhere in the Black Country, Walsall came bottom of the pile for primaries, with 71 per cent of children attending a good or outstanding school. The borough is now 143rd out of 150 local authorities.

Sandwell was 98th in the country on 83 per cent, Wolverhampton was 135th in the country on 74 per cent. Meanwhile Staffordshire dropped five places to 112th.

For secondary schools Sandwell was the worst performing borough in the region.

Refugee song to help Syrians



Eternal Purpose Tim Matthews, left, and David Tatler, have recorded a charity single on CD and download

A CANCER survivor who was moved by the plight of Syrian refugees has released a song to aid a church charity supporting them.

Two years ago David Tatler was diagnosed with cancer and was forced to give up work. Since making a full recovery, Mr Tatler from Penn, said he feels like he has been given a second chance at life. A year later he is releasing a single and will also host a night of busking in aid of charity.

Mr Tatler said: "The doctors didn't know how far the cancer had spread but I thought I had been given a death sentence. I am very grateful to the surgeons that I am now healed and I feel I have been given a new life."

Mr Tatler, who plays the guitar, teamed up with Tim Matthews, from Dudley Community Church and formed the band Eternal Purpose. The pair wrote and recorded Refugee and filmed a video in

Wombourne, which can be seen on YouTube.

The CD can be bought from Vines coffee shop in Stourbridge, the CLC Bookshop in Wolverhampton, or downloaded through iTunes. Mr Tatler is also asking buskers in Wolverhampton to sign up for A Busker's Christmas, a concert at the Salop Street church on Sunday from 6pm. The event is free but a collection will be held to help refugees.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Musicians tune up for festive concert

MUSICIANS are tuning in for a grand Christmas concert in Dudley town centre.

The Dudley Borough Christmas Concert will be taking place on Wednesday at Dudley Town Hall.

It will feature advanced strings, wind band, advanced brass band and an advanced woodwind ensemble. There will be a range of festive favourites performed.

Tickets for the concert start from £4. To book online visit dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/entertainment-live/whats-on

Spare parts giant opens new base

ONE of the world's largest suppliers of commercial vehicle spare parts has opened a base in Dudley borough.

Diesel Technic UK and Ireland is now at Building 92, Bay 1, The Pennsnett Estate at Kingswinford, which is owned and managed by London and Cambridge Properties.

The company, which is the 100 per cent owned subsidiary of German-based Diesel Technic, has agreed a 10-year lease at the 10,419 sq ft industrial unit on the estate, one of Europe's largest secure industrial estates.

Later bus service from Merry Hill

DIAMOND Bus Group is running a late-night service from the Merry Hill shopping centre from Monday.

The 002 bus will depart from the bus station at Merry Hill at 10.25pm from December 14 to 17, when the centre is open until 10pm, heading to Halesowen and Weoley Castle.

On December 18 and 21 to 23, Merry Hill will stay open until midnight and the 002 services will run even later with the last departure at 12.25am.

Information about fostering at event

PEOPLE interested in fostering can get more information at a drop-in event in Brierley Hill on Monday evening.

Dudley Council's fostering service has launched a new campaign – I foster, You Can Too, which aims to show the range of people who can foster children who need homes.

A drop-in session will take place at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. Or call the service on (01384) 815833.

Jewellery is stolen

JEWELLERY has been stolen from a home in Hagley.

Thieves broke into the property in Western Road between 9.15am and 6.10pm on Wednesday, November 25.

The raiders searched the upstairs of the property before making off with the jewels.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Fury over voting for our world champion

MORE than 75,000 people have signed the petitions, and the names still keep coming in. Don't be surprised if 100,000 people have joined the campaign by the end of the week.

And the campaign in question? More support for the flood victims in Cumbria? Tighter security on the Tube? People expressing a view on the bombing of Syria?

Nah, the latest cause celebre of the Guardian-reading classes is whether people should be allowed to vote for world heavyweight boxing champion Tyson Fury in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards. Yes, that was keeping me awake at night too.

Now, I know it is well supported, but I've always considered the BBC Sports Personality to be one of the dullest fixtures on the sporting calendar. And having taken Wladimir Klitschko's world title, will Mr Fury really be bothered about a silly little trophy from Clare Balding? Previous winners include Sir Chris Hoy and Sir Steve Redgrave. So I can't wait for the Queen to say "arise, Sir Tyson."

Still, the people who have signed the petition are up in arms because Mr Fury has said fellow nominee Jessica Ennis-Hill "slaps up quite well" and "looks fit in a dress." Silly and coarse, maybe, but what were you expecting from a boxer? A spot of contemporary romantic poetry? A few quotes from Germaine Greer?

Let's leave the petitions to the big stuff, you know the things that affect people's lives. If you really feel strongly and don't want Mr Fury to take the prize, there is still something you can do. Something that will have a real impact on the final outcome. Vote for somebody else.

MUSEUMS and police stations are closing, libraries are being staffed by volunteers. Still, it's good to know that at least one area of local authority provision seems to be doing quite well.

Last year local authorities made a £693 million profit from parking charges.

Not revenue, but profit. After all the running costs have been taken into consideration, after all the parking companies have been paid, and after all the street wardens dressed up like the Red Army have been paid. Good to know motorists aren't being treated like a cash cow or anything nasty like that.

Anyway, with all that extra lolly rolling in, you might think that the councils would be able to ease back on a few of the cutbacks. Apparently not. A spokesman for the Local Government Association said that any surplus was only spent on "essential transport projects".

Hmm. So, what, more bus lanes, which clog up our town centres? Cycle paths? Multi-coloured asphalt, speed cameras and road humps? Here's an idea. Drop all that nonsense, and give us free parking. In the places that we want it. Now that's what I call an essential transport project.



The emotional moment when Geoffrey Russon received the Legion D'Honneur from Yvonne



Geoffrey, seen with his medals alongside daughter-in-law Yvonne, back in May this year

Proud family's joy as Geoffrey is honoured

It was a dream come true for war veteran Geoffrey Russon to receive his Legion D'Honneur. **DAVID COSGROVE** reports

"THE medal has been awarded to him but he says it's for everyone who didn't manage to come back home."

Those are the words of the proud daughter-in-law of a heroic D-Day veteran as he received the French government's highest accolade.

Emotions ran high for both Geoffrey Russon and his family when the 92-year-old was finally handed the Legion D'Honneur.

Both Geoffrey and his daughter-in-law Yvonne – who has defiantly fought his corner to try to ensure he received the medal before his death – were reduced to tears as she handed over the honour.

After months of canvassing, she was able to present Geoffrey, of Cradley Heath, with the medal he earned for his efforts seven decades ago.

Anxious

It was handed to her by the French Ambassador and she gave it to Geoffrey in Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley.

Yvonne, aged 50, said she was 'proud' to be able to give him the early Christmas present and ensure his anxious wait had a happy ending.

She said: "I went in with the box open for him and said 'this is yours, this is actually your medal'."

"He was absolutely shocked and he started crying, then I started crying."

"I think he's very thankful that he actually got to see the medal before he died, as he didn't think he would. The medal has been awarded to him but he says it's for everyone who didn't manage to come back home."

Yvonne, who lives in Stafford, added: "He didn't think he was going to get this medal –



Geoffrey in 1944, at around the time of the Normandy landings in the Second World War

he always thought he would die before he actually got it. He's an amazing man and I love him to bits.

"I'm so proud of him and so happy that I managed to do something for him."

After receiving the Legion D'Honneur, shocked Geoffrey – who belongs to the Birmingham branch of the Normandy Veterans – said: "I never thought I was going to get this."

The French government announced last summer it would recognise all surviving D-Day veterans with the medal, which is the country's highest honour.

Geoffrey applied for his medal soon after the announcement was made, but both he and Yvonne feared it would not arrive until it was

too late. Geoffrey was a 19-year-old driver in the Royal Army Service Corps during the Normandy offensive.

Yvonne emailed the French Embassy and other organisations in an effort to fast-track the applications for the medal.

Deserve

Her campaign was backed by Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris and Stafford MP Jeremy Lefroy.

Geoffrey's grandson Nik posted on Facebook: "My grandad, I am so proud to call you my grandad."

"You are my hero and my best friend you deserve everything you get. Words cannot de-



Geoffrey six weeks after joining up

scribe how proud I am to be called a Russon." Well wishers have lined up to praise Geoffrey and state their delight he finally received the gong.

As the wait for the medal dragged on, housebound Geoffrey voiced his disappointment earlier this year that the process was taking so long.

There are just six Veterans in his branch – down from 150 a few years ago, he said.

"I had a letter from the Ministry of Defence saying my application had been forwarded to the French government," Geoffrey said.

"I've no idea why it's taking so long. Some will not have this medal. It's wrong. They were quick enough to get us over there."

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

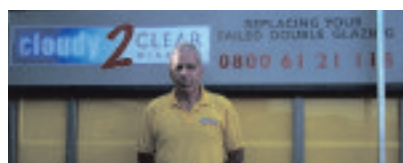
Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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I have a dream, like Martin Luther King

I recently created a stir and some rather hysterical headlines by using a quotation from Enoch Powell in a speech. I want to make it absolutely clear that when I spoke about the dangers of uncontrolled immigration and open borders there was not the slightest element of racial discrimination involved. Indeed the vast majority of new arrivals to the UK in recent years were white.

Enoch Powell used the line "Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad" back in 1968 and it's a powerful line. My use of it was purely

in reference to the madness of the UK surrendering its borders and being part of the EU project. .

My speech was also critical of multiculturalism as a theory. This does not mean I object to having people from different cultures and backgrounds in the UK, quite the opposite. It means that I want all newcomers to associate with being British and add to the richness of our shared culture by joining in rather than living separately as happens all too often now.

I think its best to sum up my views on society and equality with another

quote from an even more famous source. Doctor Martin Luther King. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character". I want all of the people of the UK to have a fair chance in life living in a country that provides opportunity for all regardless of colour, religion or background. I want us to all feel a shared pride in being British and promoting British values.

BILL ETHERIDGE MEP
Sedgley

Lanscaping better than old cinema

REGARDING the now lengthy debate about the future of the Dudley Hippodrome, have I lost the plot somewhere along the line. My memories of the place were only as a cinema, where we had the Odeon and the Plaza one on each side of the road and later as a bingo hall.

I am nearly 60 now so it's use as a venue is at least 50 years ago, the question is where were the Friends of the Hippodrome then, whilst it was already deteriorating to the point that these were the only uses it was worth then.

The place is an eyesore and needs to come down. I just hope the powers-that-be don't let this go on years and years, as with the saga of the mosque.

Pull it down now while costs are lower and as to it's replacement, flat landscaping is as good as anything, certainly rather than what is there at the moment.

L PRIEST
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

EMAIL

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Council should not ignore covenant

DUDLEY Council's plans for the Hippodrome site after demolition appear to be running roughshod over the covenant placed on the site many years ago, which basically said that if the building was demolished, it would have to be replaced by a playhouse, theatre or a coaching inn.

We cannot understand why the council refuse to lease the building to the Friends group, to allow us the opportunity to apply for the funding that would be required to return the building to its former glory. If we were given this lease, it would allow us to proceed with our plans for the site, which have been laid out clearly in three stages: use of building before renovation to generate funds; use of building during renovation; projections for when the theatre is fully functioning.

If grants could not be acquired, which is unlikely, or the theatre could not pay for itself, all that the council would have lost is time because at least the asbestos would have been removed. The Friends group passionately believe that given the opportunity, we could provide the people of Dudley and the West Midlands with a top class theatre everyone could be proud of.

G DOWNING
Dudley

Hippodrome could house the museum

WHAT a controversial situation Dudley Council find themselves in over wanting to sell off the museum building and putting the magnificent artefacts and displays into storage, that will never see the light of day again.

This small museum has bookings for educational visits well into next year and a fame that is global with visits by every top geologist for decades.

Why not re-use the Hippodrome building and place the museum there? Visitor numbers would soar and bigger and better displays could be had. There are many visitors to the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley Zoo and Castle and Dudley Lime Caverns.

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Celebrity guest helps to mark anniversary

Clent Gardening Club 2015

THE November meeting was a very special event in the club's calendar. It celebrated the 75th anniversary of its formation in 1940 by welcoming its first ever celebrity speaker in the form of Alys Fowler from Kings Heath in Birmingham and of BBC Gardeners' World fame.

Alys commenced her talk with a brief introduction outlining her career with the BBC Gardeners' World programme, firstly working behind the scenes and more recently in front of camera.

Her talk, entitled 'How to have your garden and eat it' was the result of a Gardeners' World project whereby Alys attempted to exist for a six month period eating only produce grown in her own garden.

Alys has a typical urban terraced house with the usual long narrow garden and she illustrated her talk with a variety of photographs taken in her garden.

She showed before and after pictures as the garden was somewhat neglected when she took it over.

Her concept was to grow a whole variety of vegetables and edible plants both standard and the more exotic.

Rather than have a typical vegetable plot at the end of the garden, her vegetable plants mingle with a variety of flowers and other plants in her herbaceous borders and her photographs illustrated that this was a very attractive mix.

Her talk contained a plethora of advice on the cultivation of vegetables and she also explained that mixing flowers and vegetables significantly helped to combat pests and diseases.

Her talk was most entertaining and informative and was very well received by members.

A splendidly decorated birthday cake baked by club member Jean Riley was then cut by Alys together with president and longest serving member John Partington plus club chairman Martin Grange, after which members enjoyed a light buffet and a glass of wine or two to celebrate the milestone anniversary.

One lucky member went home with the



Celebrity speaker Alys Fowler cuts the celebration birthday cake with president and longest serving member John Partington and chairman Martin Grange

evening's raffle prize which was a copy of Alys' book written around her talk and which she happily signed.

At the end of the meeting the chairman wished everyone a happy Christmas, there being no December meeting, and reminded everyone that the next meeting on January 22 would be the club's AGM.

All are welcome to the meetings which are held at Clent Village Hall on the fourth Friday each month and anyone interested in either joining or just visiting the club can get further details by visiting the website at <https://clentgardeningclub.wordpress.com> or by contacting the chairman on 01562 883009/07917 184762.

Christmas festivities in church

West Mids Federation

WEST Midlands Federation of Townswomen will be holding a Christmas celebration on Saturday, December 12, in St Thomas's Church, Market Street, Stourbridge, from 2.15pm.

The Mayoress of Dudley Jayne Waltho and national chairman Margaret Key and her husband, Peter, have accepted an invitation to join them.

The programme will consist of a selection of seasonal readings and carols. Wollaston Guild Choir will present their selection of carols and Ann Tomlinson will be their soloist.

The Revd Andrew Sillis will conduct the service and organist Mr Callum Algar will also give a recital.

The public is most welcome to join in the service. Programmes will be available at the church door on the day at a cost of 50p which will include a hot drink and mince pie in the church hall following the service.

£500 raised for charity

Sedgley E TG

SEDGLEY (E) Guild's craft section held their annual lunch gathering at the Lodge in Dudley. An enjoyable time was had by all.

The guild was also celebrating the success of the open day selling members' crafts. More than £500 was made, which will go towards Cancer Research.

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Scooby BOO! Presley the giant scaredy-cat



All shook up – nervous Great Dane Presley, gets a reassuring cuddle from his owner Sian Barrett, from Oldbury

HE may be more than 6ft tall standing on his back legs but this Great Dane is a real-life Scooby Doo – cowering at the vacuum cleaner and running away from terriers.

The slightest fright will send the two-year-old charging to owner Sian Barrett for a reassuring cuddle.

Sian, aged 46, from Oldbury, says 13-and-a-half stone Presley is terrified of smaller dogs and will run and hide when he's confronted by another pooch.

Sian said: "Presley is definitely a real-life Scooby Doo, he is afraid of everything. I was walking Presley in the park and he got scared off by a West Highland terrier, which is tiny compared to him."

"He is such a timid dog that I have to go out of the room whenever I get plastic bags out. He hates them. The rustling scares him. My husband calls him a massive wuss."

Sian, a mother-of-three who runs pet shop Langley Pet Supplies, says Presley, who she has shown at Crufts, has a kindly nature that always wins people over.



What's rustling! Presley gets a fright

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Fears that body found in burned van is surfer son

TRIBUTES have been paid to a surfer, originally from a village near Stourbridge, who is feared dead after his burned-out camper van was found in Mexico with two bodies inside.

Adam Coleman, aged 33, and his friend Dean Lucas were reported missing after travelling from Canada to Mexico.

Mr Coleman's father Ian, who lives in Kidderminster, has issued a heartfelt tribute to his 'adventurous, fun-loving boy'. He said: "Adam was such an adrenaline junkie. He was a beautiful and free-spirited chap."

His son enjoyed surfing, snowboarding and travelling and became an Australian surf champion at the age of 22. Meanwhile, Adam's sister Sarah Cattermole wrote on Facebook: "I just wish this was one big dream that I was going to wake up from."

Tests

Mr Coleman lived in Cookley until his family moved to Australia when he was aged six.

Prosecutors in the Mexican state of Sinaloa have confirmed they are performing forensic tests on the two badly-burned bodies as part of the hunt for the missing men.

Mr Coleman and Mr Lucas, also 33, failed to arrive as planned on November 21 in the city of Guadalajara where they were due to meet up with Mr Coleman's girlfriend Andrea Gomez. The pair, who went to college together, were last seen alive on November 20.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has released a statement on behalf of the families of both men. It said: "The families and partners are aware the van in which they were travelling has been located by



Adam Coleman, originally from Cookley, with his girlfriend Andrea Gomez



Mexican police with the burned-out vehicle found after a week-long search

Mexican authorities and that a tragic event has occurred. The families hold deep fears for the safety of their sons but stress that they are still waiting for details to be confirmed.

Mr Coleman ran his own landscape gardening and pest control businesses.

His brother Danny, who lives in Kidderminster, said: "Adam is such an amazing guy who lives life to the full."

Adam Coleman's father Ian confirmed that his ex-wife and daughter were travelling to Mexico to formally identify his son. Adam's mother Sherree, 53, was taking her son's dental records.

The grieving father added: "It just doesn't feel real. We are trying to piece together the events which led up to this awful tragedy."

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New material is 'game changer'

WESTFIELD Sportscars in Kingswinford is to work with Boeing and UK, US and Chinese universities on a project to use a new ultra light material in its vehicles.

It was recently awarded Niche Vehicle Network funding to investigate potential uses of microlattice.

Microlattice was created by Boeing which claims it is the world's lightest material.

The synthetic metallic material consists of an ultra light metal foam and is lighter than Styrofoam.

Westfield chief executive Julian Turner said: "Due to the space constraints of our vehicles we have to innovate with materials and technology. We are very excited to be working with microlattice as a complementary material in the vehicle. This material is a game changer for our vehicles."

Schoolboy wins bravery award



Sedgley schoolboy Ollie-Shea Quinn, aged seven, of Woodsetton, with his Little Star award

A BRAVE schoolboy who battled cancer has won a special bravery award supported by football star Wayne Rooney.

Cotwall End Primary School pupil Ollie-Shea Quinn, aged seven, was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in April, after suffering from harrowing hip pain and struggling to walk.

Now the Dudley youngster's courage has been recognised with Research UK's Kids & Teens Star Award, which is backed by the England and Manchester United footballer.

Ollie-Shea is currently in remission after receiving chemotherapy treatment for five months.

His mother Julie, aged 41, said: "As soon as I heard about Cancer Research UK's Kids & Teens Star Awards I put Ollie-Shea forward. He has endured such pain and trauma. It is amazing to see him get better

Awards double for Beacon's opticians

ONE of the Black Country's best-known charities was the major winner at this year's Social Enterprise (SE) West Midlands Awards after its pioneering new venture achieved a double triumph.

Beacon Opticians Plus, which provide optical healthcare, took home the SE Potential and SE Prima titles from the event at the University of Birmingham after impressing judges with the way it is competing with high street and independent opticians.

Just two months on from its official launch the social enterprise has turned over £3,500 in sales, completed 50 eye tests and offered people additional support and services through the Beacon Centre for the Blind in Sedgley

Beacon Opticians Plus's Nick Comley said: "It was fantastic to be surrounded by some of the finest social enterprises in the West Midlands and even better that we came away with two of the main awards."

Thousands living in fear of eviction across the region

LANDLORDS in the Black Country filed more than 3,000 court claims to evict tenants over 12 months.

The Ministry of Justice figures show that people who live in rented properties in Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton are among the most at risk of being booted out of their homes in the West Midlands.

Homelessness charity Shelter has expressed fears for the increasing number of people in the region facing eviction.

Between October 1, 2014, and September 30 this year, landlords issued 1,075 repossession

claims in Sandwell – a rate of one in every 49 rented homes in the borough. During the same period there were 898 court applications in Wolverhampton (one in 50 properties) and 753 in Dudley (one in 54).

Those three Black Country boroughs ranked fourth, fifth and sixth respectively as the most risky areas in the West Midlands for renting homes.

Alison Mohammed, director of services at Shelter, said: "Each and every week hundreds of people in the region receive a notice through the door with the devastating news that they might

lose their home. We speak to parents every day who are desperately trying to keep a roof over their children's heads, but with rents soaring and housing support being slashed, many are finding themselves at breaking point."

Shelter has stated that more families are at risk of eviction due to cuts in housing benefit and a lack of affordable homes to buy.

Ms Mohammed added: "Over 2,400 children in the West Midlands will wake up homeless and in temporary accommodation this Christmas and, tragically, the situation looks set to get worse."

Dragon finds a mate at zoo

DUDLEY Zoo has taken delivery of a female Chinese water dragon, a perfect companion for its male.

The female was donated to the zoo by Matthew Ford, who runs Specialist Wildlife Services, which transports a lot of the zoo's creatures.

Dudley zoo curator Richard Brown said: "The female is around 18 months old so is fully grown and measures about 18 inches long.

"Chinese water dragons are brilliant green and very striking to look at. We will look at breeding the pair in the future."

The dragons feed on a range of insects, small fish, amphibians, small reptiles and mammals. Their sticky tongue is designed to help them hold their prey.

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Donations flood in to boost toy appeal

TRADERS and toy fanatics generously supported the Express & Star Christmas Toy Appeal.

A drop-off bin was put in place at the family-friendly toy fair in Dudley's Station Hotel on Sunday.

The event was organised by Kings Street Toys and Collectables in Wolverhampton, who were the first business to get on board the campaign when it was launched three weeks ago.

From Barbie dolls and Action Men to a Thomas the Tank Engine train shed – a host of donations big and small were made by owners of the stalls, as well as those that attended the fair.

Successful

Ricki Guy, co-owner of Kings Street Toys and organiser of the fair, said: "The fair was very successful and considering the terrible weather we still had about 250 to 300 people come along on the day. It was great to be able to support the Toy Appeal again. I think we would have had more donations from the general public but sadly the weather put people off to bring things with them, but we were still more than happy with what we received.

"A lot of traders at the end pulled

out a selection of bits and pieces to donate and I think overall the appeal is a very good initiative and fantastic cause to support.

"I'm glad that the donations will be going towards a good cause. And with it being Dudley many people will know someone who is connected to either the steel works or the children's wards at not only Russell's Hall but New Cross and Sandwell hospitals too."

Smyths Toys are also backing the Express & Star Toy Appeal. The chain, which has stores in Walsall, Wolverhampton, Oldbury and Kidderminster, donated £300 worth of toys and gifts to add to the floods of gifts the campaign has already received.

The donation from Smyths will help The Chronicle's sister daily newspaper support causes all over the Black Country including poorly children at hospitals in Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley, as well as families of Caparo workers who recently lost their jobs.

The campaign has seen the Express & Star team up with Shrewsbury based Storage King. For more details go to www.expressandstar.co.uk/toyappeal or call 01902 319483.



Chad Smith, of Dudley, with gifts from the toy fair held at the Station Hotel in Dudley

City festival hopes Slam Dunked by Civic Hall closure

NEXT year's Slam Dunk festival will not take place in Wolverhampton after organisers were unable to find a suitable venue in the city.

The festival, which showcases the best of pop-punk, emo and alt-rock draws a crowd of more than 3,000 and has taken place at the Civic Hall for the past three years.

But the closure of the venue for a £10.4 million refurbishment has forced organisers to move the 2016 event to Birmingham's NEC.

Festival founder and director, Ben Ray, said: "We desperately wanted to stay in Wolverhampton because the city has been so good to us.

"We worked with the council to try and find a suitable venue, but unfortunately the only alternative option would not have been big enough to cater for the level of acts we have for next year. There was also concern that the main stage would have been on a street that was too small for the size of the festival."

Staging the event at the NEC will increase capacity to 40,000, with more than 40 bands set to play across seven stages.

Mr Ray added: "We'd love to come back to Wolverhampton. We'll see how it goes at the NEC and look at our options for future festivals."

Slam Dunk 2016 runs at the NEC on May 29 and Panic! At The Disco are set to headline with an exclusive UK festival performance. Of Mice and Men, New Found Glory, Four Year Strong, Every Time I Die, Issues and Real Friends have also been confirmed. Visit www.slamdunkmusic.com for details on the line-up and tickets.

More than one in ten will drink and drive

TWELVE per cent of drivers in the West Midlands plan to have one or more alcoholic drinks this Christmas and still get behind the wheel.

Of these, 23 per cent believe they will be over the legal limit when they take to the road. Their attitude has been described as 'shocking and inexcusable'.

The figures come from a survey carried out by Co-op Insurance. It coincides with the launch of West Midlands Police's annual campaign to tackle motorists who get behind the wheel while high on drugs or after drinking alcohol.

Police will use a £40,000 Government grant to carry out roadside drug tests using handheld testing kits.

In the new Co-op survey, the West Midlands came third in the country in the league of shame for drink drivers.

Nick Ansley, head of motor insurance at The Co-op, said: "The fact that drivers believe that they are going to be over the limit when they drive this Christmas is not only shocking but inexcusable.

Devastating

"The effect of drink driving is far-reaching and can have devastating consequences for the drivers themselves, their passengers, other road users and their communities.

"We are urging people to designate a driver this Christmas to ensure that everyone gets home safely."

By Jamie Brassington

The survey also included the top 10 reasons why people opt to take the risk of drinking and driving.

The most common excuse – 31 per cent – was that people felt it will not harm anyone, followed by taxis being too expensive (28 per cent) and not wanting to walk home (25 per cent).

Other reasons included that drivers had already been drink-drivers without consequences (20 per cent), roads would be quiet (18 per cent) and those who thought alcohol didn't affect their driving (10 per cent).

Those caught driving or attempting to drive over the legal limit can receive six months imprisonment, an unlimited fine and a driving ban for at least one year.

Despite this, four in five of those who believe they will be over the limit, rely on their car for work.

The findings have also revealed drivers' attitudes towards driving the day after a heavy night of drinking with more than a quarter having driven within a few hours of waking up after a boozy night out.

Dental plan for shop

AN ELECTRICAL shop in Dudley will be turned into a dental surgery after plans were given the green light.

The proposals for change of use for 73 Dixons Green Road from retail to health have been given the go-ahead by council planners. Purity Dental will use the premises as a cosmetic and dental surgery, part of the business at 74 Dixons Green Road. It will include a car park.

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Golf day has raised £2,000

A FINANCIAL services company raised £2,200 at a golf day for a breast cancer charity.

Prosperity Wealth, based in St John's Road, Stourbridge, held its second annual charity golf day to raise funds for Breast Cancer Now.

Around 80 players, including staff and clients, took part in the sporting fundraiser at Bewdley Pines Golf Club and clubbed together to raise £2,200.

Breast Cancer Now is the UK's largest breast cancer charity and is dedicated to funding research into the disease.

Company director, Matt Bell, said: "This is a charity that is very close to our hearts and I'm delighted that we have been able to raise this fantastic amount of money to help them continue their work."

"It was a fantastic day and I would like to thank staff from Prosperity Wealth as well as our clients who gave up their time to help raise this money."

Village art display is picture perfect



Gaïl Belchamber, left and Jacqueline Bradley with their art

ARTISTS from Hagley made a colourful splash in their latest exhibition of original paintings with more than 200 pieces of work on show.

Hagley Art Club's annual exhibition, which is now in its 26th year, was opened by Viscount Cobham of Hagley Hall.

Around 400 visitors attended the exhibition over its three days, with exhibition organiser Hazel Gillard declaring the event a success.

"It was great, it was really successful," she said. "Lord Cobham opened it and he chose six paintings that were highly commended and the overall winner was Graham Madders."

"We sold some of the paintings and they were more the high-end ones. The sales were slightly down on previous years but because we sold the more expensive paintings we actually might have taken more money than we have in the past."

Visitors got the chance to view the exhibits, which were priced from £50 to £100, at Hagley's Community Centre in Worcester Road.

Volunteers needed to help the lonely

PEOPLE are being asked to give up their time to help those who are lonely or isolated.

Dudley Council is launching a befriending service to provide one-to-one and group assistance to housing tenants.

The scheme intends to help people gain a more positive outlook by becoming more involved in society. Volunteers will be asked to provide friendly, informal support.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, in charge of housing in the borough, said: "The festive season is a time when many of us make a pledge to undertake a New Year's resolution and often these relate to becoming more active in the local community. The befriending service offers individuals the opportunity to help housing tenants who need help, assistance and perhaps a friendly face."

Call 07827 873394 or email stayconnected@dudley.gov.uk for details of how to volunteer. Training will be provided.

London Midland win rail deal after a £13m pledge

LONDON Midland has won the contract to continue operating train services in the West Midlands.

It will see the company introduce a £13 million package of passenger improvements.

Free wi-fi will be provided on trains, extra services will be put on and additional car parking at busy stations will be introduced.

London Midland was awarded the Department for Transport (DfT) contract until October 2017.

It includes putting on two extra evening services every weekday from

London to the Trent Valley, providing an additional 2,300 seats from Euston each week and earlier services to central Birmingham on Sunday mornings from surrounding towns.

It is also to introduce new and upgraded ticket machines at selected stations, with click and collect and contactless payment options.

There will also be new targets to improve customer satisfaction and train punctuality.

London Midland said improvements worth £13m are planned over the next 18 months.

It will also have to meet tough new targets to improve train cleanliness,

install CCTV on cross-city Birmingham services and equip station staff with electronic tablets so better information is given to travellers.

The operator will also be required to introduce smart ticketing on trains, building on the existing Swift smart-card scheme.

London Midland managing director, Patrick Verwer, said: "Winning this contract is a great endorsement by the DfT of how London Midland is focused on improving our passengers' journeys. Since 2007 we have invested nearly £300 million in trains and stations. Over the last two years we have significantly improved performance."



MD Patrick Verwer

Sport manager among the best

A SPORT and physical activity manager has been named among the best in the country.

Dudley Council's Rachael Doyle was listed as one of the most inspiring physical activity professionals by industry giants UK Active at the national Active Training Awards.

Halesowen-based Rachael gained the accolade in recognition of her work over the last 12 months that has paved the way for an increased programme of sport and physical activities at council leisure centres and parks. They all now offer indoor and outdoor classes called 'functional fitness'.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "We are so proud of Rachael's achievements, as part of her 18 years' service to Dudley Council."

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Heartbreak and nostalgic themes

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

NOSTALGIA runs through CeeLo Green's **Heart Blanche**, a slick set of songs from the Atlanta soul singer looking back to the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Est 1980s pays tribute to the likes of Duran Duran and Billy Idol, and sounds like them too, whilst the sultry southern soul vibe of Mother May I has the benefit of Mark Ronson's retro styled magic. Work, a probable hit, has more than a hint of Cameo and Prince, and Tonight samples Music by John Miles, then borrows the Theme to Taxi for Sign Of The Times.

The gospel flavoured CeeLo Green Sings The Blues is a highlight, Music To My Soul and Race Against Time are both prime examples of the CeeLo brand of pop/R&B. However, the album hits a maudlin low with the track Robin Williams and peters out with forgettable songs, leaving a half-decent album.

The seventh album from **Seal**, entitled rather obviously **7**, is a break-up album with songs that reflect the pain of a broken relationship, following the end of his marriage to supermodel Heidi Klum. That's pretty obvious with songs such as The Big Love Has Died and Half A Heart. But for all the rich, ragged-edged soulfulness of his vocals, the emotional level never reaches passionate. Immaculately produced by Trevor Horn, 7 nevertheless sounds stuck in the 1990s. Best of the bunch is the gently funky Monaschow.

Stourport-born singer-songwriter Clifford T Ward, best known for his songs Gaye and Home Thoughts From Abroad, was plain Cliff Ward when he fronted swinging '60s out-



CeeLo Green draws on influences from the 1960s, '70s and '80s



The break-up of his marriage has influenced Seal's seventh album

fit **The Secrets** before finding fame in the '70s. **Infatuation: Singles and Demos 1966-68** rescues the band's mid-60s output for CBS from obscurity. Whilst hardly in the category of lost classics, songs like She's Dangerous, I Know What Her Name Is and Keeping My Head Above Water are groovy in a Kinks/Hollies way. Path Through The Forest was in tune with the coming tide of psychedelic weirdness. The sleeve notes delve back into the Black Country, Brum and Kidderminster music scene of a half century ago.

There will be lots of musical nostalgia for those who watched TV in the '60s on the various artists album **Escape In Time: Popular British Television Themes of the 1960s**. These were the days when theme tunes were

bold and brassy, jazzy and dynamic, yet still somehow as thoroughly British as a brollie and a bowler hat.

The music was delivered by Johnny Dankworth, the John Barry Seven, Geoff Love & His Orchestra, guitar twanger Bert Weedon and King of the '60s TV theme Ron Grainger. The latter contributes the Steptoe & Son theme (called Old Ned), Comedy Playhouse (Happy Joe) and wonderfully stereotypically French style Maigret Theme.

Other favourites include Coronation Street (the theme was called Lancashire Blues), The Saint, Animal Magic, Juke Box Jury, the original The Avengers, What The Papers Say (still to be heard on BBC radio) and the tick tocking opening to Anthony Newley's surreal The Strange World of Gurney Slade.

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Ban on Adele gig tickets off touts

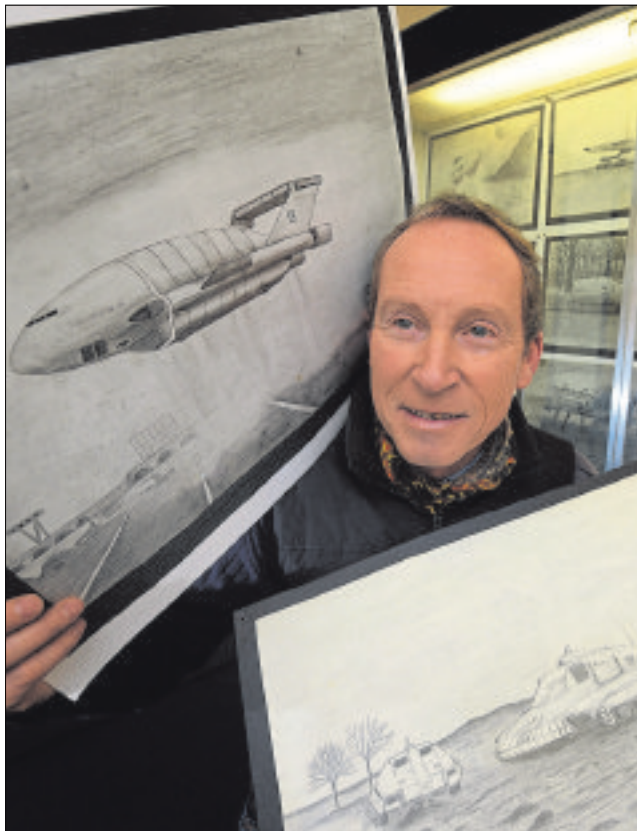
TICKETS for Adele's concerts bought on 'secondary' websites will be cancelled and left worthless, says the company handling sales as it cracks down on touts charging up to £2,000.

The singer will be performing at Birmingham's Genting Arena on March 29 and 30 and now extra dates have been added for April 1 and 2.

But, in order to gain entry, ticket holders will be asked to present valid photo ID matching the name of the customer who placed the order printed on their ticket.

Each buyer must enter the concert at the same time as their guests and name changes will not be allowed. The TicketMaster website says: "Failure to bring photo ID matching the name will result in refusal of entry to the show. There will be no exception."

3,2,1 Thunderbirds art go!



Allyn Wyer, of Stourbridge, with some of his nostalgic cult TV sketches now on show

FROM Captain Scarlet to Thunderbirds and Fireball XL5 – one man has turned his passion for the cult TV into art.

Allyn Wyer, aged 55, says he has dabbled in art for most of his life and now 10 of his pencil drawings featuring machines from the shows created by Gerry Anderson are on display in his home town.

This Saturday will make the last chance to view the exhibition at Stourbridge Library which includes an accumulation of Mr Wyer's drawings – many of which he drew while on his lunch breaks.

"I would actually draw a few of them

Girl, 13, punched in the face by driver

POLICE are hunting a lorry driver who punched a 13-year-old girl in the face, knocking her to the floor, as she walked to school in Rowley Regis.

The attacker also tugged at the terrified girl's hair until her screams alerted passers-by and he fled in a flat-bed lorry.

Police are appealing for help to catch the attacker who struck as the child was walking in Harvest Road at around 8.15am last Thursday.

Detective Sergeant Andy Robinson said: "The young girl was not seriously injured but understandably extremely distressed by the incident. "This appears to be an isolated incident – we have no other reports of similar offences – and the motive for the assault is unclear. It was certainly a shocking attack in broad daylight as the girl was on her way to school. We urgently need to trace the driver."

The attacker is described as white, around 30 years old, 5ft 10ins tall, with short hair. He may have been wearing blue overalls. The flat-bed lorry was blue with a white cab.

Anyone with information should call police on 101 (extension 812 3038) or can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Schedule for police station closures to begin in January

POLICE buildings in the Black Country will start closing from January as plans to save £8.6 million were backed by bosses at West Midlands Police.

Dudley, Kingswinford, Halesowen and Stourbridge stations will be axed, while eight other depots and storage facilities will close and be sold off, the force has confirmed.

A total of 13 Black Country sites are among 28 police buildings in the West Midlands that

will shut over the next two years, reducing the number of sites by 10 per cent and bringing in £8.6m through property sales and savings on running costs. A further £3.1m will be saved on maintenance work.

Following a consultation, the move passed through the final discussion stage at a meeting of the region's Strategic Policing and Crime Board last week.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has backed the move, and says that 'officers, not buildings' keep people safe. He is set to formally announce the clo-

tures within the next few days. The move has sparked fury among many politicians and rank and file police officers.

Mr Jamieson said: "These changes will have no impact on response times as response officers are not based at these locations.

"Between 2010 and 2015 West Midlands Police was cut harder than any other force in the country which means we still have difficult decisions to make.

"My priority is always will be people not buildings. Many people from across the political divide have realised this."

ITV apologises for Lenny gaffe

ITV News has apologised after showing footage of Ainsley Harriott during Sir Lenny Henry's knighthood interview.

The TV company has come under fire after cutting to a clip of the TV chef performing at the Comedy Store. The gaffe occurred after Dudley-born Sir Lenny had earlier spoken of his attempt to encourage more diversity in the TV industry.

Comic Relief co-founder Sir Lenny was recognised for services to drama and charity (see front page). He has previously expressed concern over the low number of black, Asian and ethnic minorities working in the creative industries.

ITV put together a package which included an interview with the star and archive footage, including the Harriott clip.

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Trams back in centre of Brum

TRAMS are up and running again in Birmingham city centre for the first time in over 60 years.

Passengers can now travel to a new stop in Bull Street, the first step in the opening of the £128 million city centre tramline extension.

Services began running to the stop last weekend, the first time trams have run in the city centre since they were withdrawn in 1953.

The modern Metro network previously went as far as Snow Hill.

Building of the Midland Metro extension into the main shopping area is being carried out by Centro.

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Youngsters gotta sing and gotta dance



Youngster from Neat Feet School of Dance with one of the musical numbers that delighted audiences at Brierley Hill

NEAT Feet School of Dance performed an all-singing all-dancing showcase at Brierley Hill Civic Hall with more than 100 young performers presenting sell-out performances of their show Magic of the Musicals.

Principal Lynne Rowell said: "The talented cast worked extremely hard and had spent many weeks perfecting the well-know musical numbers, including excerpts from The

Lion King, Mary Poppins, Mamma Mia, Les Miserables and Oliver! and many more."

Audience members were wowed by the colourful costumes and creative choreography.

The Brierley Hill-based school of dance offers ballet for children and adults, tap, freestyle, contemporary or street dance. Contact Lynne Rowell on (01384) 423496.

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Blow to church pub plan

CAMPAIGNERS hoping to transform a derelict pub into a community centre have been dealt a blow after plans to turn it into seven homes were submitted.

A £500,000 project by a local church to transform the Golden Cross pub in Netherton into a modern community centre was revealed last year.

Members of Primrose Hill Congregational Church held talks with the pub's owners last year about taking

over the building and turning it into a community hub. But the application to build homes on the site appears to have scuppered that scheme.

Praying

Church leader Hayley Ball said: "Naturally we're disappointed because we did pursue it and we were praying hard and thinking we might be able to get it."

"We were hoping to turn it into a community hub with lots of things there for the community. But if it's

going to be turned into homes then that's something that's out of our control."

Ms Ball said church leaders had held serious discussions about taking over the venue but had not reached the stage of sorting out finances.

"We didn't get that far with the financial side but we did have conversations about what we would do with the centre," she said.

Vandals have destroyed much of the inside of the pub, which stands at the corner of Cradley Road and Saltwells Road.

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Sunjay's blues are slick and cool

FOLK ALBUMS

by Danny Farragher

Sunjay
Black & Blues
SUNJAY, he now prefers just his first name, is an excellent bluesman.

For such a young musician he plays his guitar like he had it in the cradle instead of a rattle or cuddly toy.

The album was produced by veteran musician and producer Eddy Morton in his Stourbridge studio and was recorded in a day.

This could be behind its raw, unpolished feel which gives it an honesty, authenticity and almost an urgency.

Drop Down Mama is one Derby-born Sunjay has been taking around on his tours for some time and now the foot stomper is down on disc it still has the feel of a live performance.

What follows is the depression era blues, Nobody Wants To Know You When You Down & Out where Sunjay shows a side to his playing that is slicker than a latex clad tobogganist who has been covered in grease and sent down an oiled slipway.

He keeps the bluesy sound but gives it the kind of polish you associate with Jake Thackray. If you want to get a feel for his skill with the frets then the next track Duncan & Brady is as good an example as any.

Sunjay has a really smooth style of playing blues. His voice lends itself more to the serpentine sound rather than the dirty or gritty vocals of legends such as Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters or Lightnin' Hopkins. This album is a testimony to his talent. He sounds cool, plays cool, looks cool so much so you almost expect a little light to come when he opens his guitar case.



Sunjay along with Eddy Morton laid down his new album in one day

Sam Kelly
Lost Boys

This is a superb album not just because of Sam Kelly's fantastic voice and ability to fill the songs he sings with life but also it reeks of folk, but it drips tradition and is the antithesis of so many albums which are trying to make folk sound more commercial.

Kelly's debut album opens with Jolly Waggoners where he shows you all you need is an instrument, a good voice, enthusiasm for what you are singing.

Banish Misfortune brings in the superb banjo picking of Jamie Francis, who wrote the track and whose style sounds very much like the precision playing of Gerry O'Connor.

Kelly's distinct voice which has that slight warble alongside Francis' picking gives the mountain sound of Six Miners some authenticity with the singer opening it up with a whole new freshness. What has also makes this so enjoyable is the quality of talent Kelly has assembled around him which includes Ciaran Algar, Graham Coe, Lukas Drinkwater and Josh Franklin.

Mairead & Anna
Best Day

If you could make a mink coat out of music then this selection from Scottish duo Mairead Green and Anna Massey would fit the bill.

Green and Massey are like a two woman orchestra and this album gives them more than ample opportunity to show off their impressive multi-instrumental skills.

This is a chance to enjoy two of the most talented Scottish female folk musicians around.

Damien O'Kane
Areas of High Traffic

It's been five years since the talented honorary Yorkshireman produced a solo album. This is a very personal collection from Damien O'Kane and one where he is trying to give traditional songs, which mean a great deal to him, a modern slant.

The Colrairie-born artist is a fine singer, songwriter, guitarist and music arranger.

His voice has that distinctive and traditional Gaelic quality, which has the drone feel of the uilleann pipes.

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Steaks are high at new Fire Grill

Musical is no drag for boy band hunk Duncan

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

FIRE Grill is a new fast casual restaurant in Dudley which will prove to be a Mecca for meat lovers.

Newly opened just outside the town centre on The Broadway, Fire Grill specialises in delicious grilled steaks, chicken, lamb and fish. If the constant stream of positive reviews that the company's restaurant in Worcester has been receiving on social media is anything to go by, the people of Dudley are in for a treat!

The food is prepared and cooked by award-winning chefs from around the world and Fire Grill's delicious menu offers a unique taste of real healthy cuisine without compromising on quality, freshness of the produce and, most importantly, nutritional value.

Only the finest and highest quality ingredients are used to create authentic food based on traditional formulas with a contemporary and creative approach.

For example, Fire Grill's signature dish, Peri Peri Chicken, is an absolute show stopper.

When it comes to our Peri Peri Chicken & Spicy Rice, you will want to keep it to yourself! Succulent fresh chicken marinated for at least 24 hours in our unique Peri Peri sauce, then flamed grilled to order in your chosen sauce.

Or why not try one of our mouth watering steaks, served plain or gently spiced to your liking with a side of chunky steak chips or sour cream and chive mash. Choose from our spe-



Smart decor and delicious food at Fire Grill on The Broadway, Dudley

cial peppercorn or mushroom sauce served separately to complement your steak.

One reviewer described one of our steaks as "quite possibly, the best they had ever had", whilst another commented that their steak was "cooked to perfection" — high praise indeed.

Our 'Fresh off the Grill' menu also has an exciting range of starters and other main course treats such as burgers, lamb chops, kebabs, sea bass and sharing platters plus a 'Little Brats' children's Menu.

For those with a sweet tooth, who

still have room, round of your meal with one of our desserts including our legendary winter warmer, the delicious hot cookie dough and ice cream OMG.

For those of you in a rush we offer a full takeaway service with a 15 per cent discount and free delivery within three miles. So why not go on a tasty takeaway adventure and try something different this weekend?

For more details of what to expect, and whilst our website is being completed, visit us on Facebook at Top Grill and see videos of our chefs at work and images of our unique dishes.

FROM boy band hunk to drag queen — Duncan James is barely recognisable in his latest stage role.

The tattooed star of Blue could hardly look any more camp donned in bright platform shoes and a dress made of pink and yellow flip-flops.

Starring as Tick in hit musical Priscilla Queen of the Desert, he will be heading to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next year for a six-day run.

The show is currently touring the UK and will arrive at the Lichfield Street venue on May 2 until May 7.

As one of four members of pop band Blue, James sold more than 16 million records and is sure to draw crowds from across the Black Country.

Tickets only went on sale last week but bosses at the Grand said there has already been a surge in demand.

Abuse

Priscilla Queen of the Desert is based on the 1994 Australian film, The Adventures of Priscilla, and follows the journey of two drag queens and a transsexual woman as they travel across the Aussie outback.

On the road the trio meet a variety of characters and have to deal with a whole host of difficult situations including homophobic abuse and facing up to their pasts.

The action is accompanied on stage by a dazzling array of outrageous costumes and a hit parade of dance floor favourites including Say a Little Prayer, Go West, Hot Stuff and Always on My Mind.

Joining James in the lead roles are Simon Green as Bernadette and Adam Bailey, whose theatre credits include Chicago and Starlight Express, as Felicia.

James appears to be loving his role



All dressed up — it's Duncan James as you've never seen before

in the musical. He recently posted on his official Twitter account: "Excited to be back on the Priscilla UK Tour tomorrow and can't wait to see all the fab cast and crew again."

Last year James, who had three number one albums and 40 number one singles worldwide with Blue,

starred as Jack in the winter pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk at Birmingham Hippodrome. He is also known for appearing on the 2007 series of Dancing on Ice. Tickets are from £20.75 to £40.75. Book at www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429 212.

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Hairspray

Preview – Page 23



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Chuckle time!

Peter Pan panto is here
See Page 23

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Stereophonics



Friday, 7.30pm
Genting Arena, B'ham

Welsh rockers Stereophonics played a 16-arena-sell-out tour in 2013 following the release of their album *Graffiti On The Train*. And now they're back for more.

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Madonna



Wednesday, 8pm
Barclaycard Arena, B'ham

The Rebel Heart Tour follows the March release of the *Rebel Heart* album, and performances at the Grammys and The Brits. Stars don't come any bigger than Madge.

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Ken Dodd



Sunday, 7pm
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Don Broco
Sat at 7pm, £15
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Kick Up The 80s: 80s Tribute
Fri at 8pm, Sat at 8pm, £8 - £9.50
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

The Overtones
Fri at 7pm, £21.50 - £38.50
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Simply Red: Reformed! 2015 World Tour
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Madonna: Rebel Heart Tour
Wed at 8pm, £175
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

The Bootleg Beatles
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Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

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Def Leppard & Whitesnake
Sat at 6.45pm, £45.70
Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

The Selector
Sun at 7pm, £16.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Into The Shadows: Shadows Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm, £10 - £15
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

The Darkness
Fri at 6pm, £25
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Slaves
Wed at 7pm - 11pm, £13.50
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Stereophonics
Fri at 7.30pm, £33.20 - £48.20
Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

Slade: Classic Hits
Thu at 9.45pm, The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Iain Mackenzie And Georgina Jackson: Frank Sinatra: Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm - 10pm, £12.50 - £37.50
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Joe Carnall Jnr
Thu at 7pm - 10pm, The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

Talon: Eagles Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm, The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Sun at 7.30pm, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

Black Star Riders
Thu at 7pm, Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Peter Cox & Richard Drummie
Fri at 7.30pm, The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

The Space Hoppers
Fri at 8pm, Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

The Wonder Stuff
Thu at 7pm, O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

The Stubble Brothers
Thu at 12am, Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

Space
Fri at 7pm, £14
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

The Sex Pissed Dolls
Sun at 7.30pm, £12
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

The Charlatans
Sat at 7pm, £27.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Fallout
Fri at 10pm, £3-£5
The Grapes, Stafford, ST16 2HZ. Call 07989 174631

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Sat at 8pm
Knight's Quest, Rowley Regis, B65 0EE. Call 0121 561 5599

The Beatles tribute Help!
Sat at 8pm, £6/£8
Arena Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 8QR. Call 0844 884 2920

FOLK & ACOUSTIC

Arthur Doherty Band
Wed at 7.30pm, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Kieran Halpin
Fri at 7.30pm, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. Call 01902 572090

Luna Rossa
Sun at 7.45pm, The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Live And Picking
Thu at 7.30pm, £5
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. Call 01902 572090

The Urban Voodoo Machine
Wed at 7.30pm, The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Irish Music Session
Wed at 8pm, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

JAZZ, SOUL & BLUES

Sam Coombes Trio
Fri at 5pm, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Jersey Boys
Tue at 7.30pm, The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

The Delray Rockets
Sun at 8pm, Free
The Grapes, Stafford, ST16 2HZ. Call 07989 174631

Tim Jenks - 'Realms of Glory'
Sun at 7.30pm
Holy Trinity Church, Heath Town, Wolverhampton. Call 01902 754487

Tim Jenks - Unplugged
Wed at 8pm
Claregate Pub, Wolverhampton, WV6 9ED. Call 01902 754761

Wabash Jazz Four
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Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

Christmas With The Salvation Army
Sun at 2.30pm, 6pm, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Christmas Carol Concerts
Mon, Tue at 7.30pm
Wightwick Manor and Gardens, Wolverhampton, WV6 8EE. Call 01902 760100

Metropolitan Brass Quintet
Sat at 10.30am, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

So This Is Christmas
Wed at 8pm - 10.30pm, £21 - £26
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

The Ukulele Orchestra Of Great Britain
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Only Men Aloud
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Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

THEATRE

The Nutcracker
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 22.30pm, 7.30pm, Sun at 1pm, £19 - £56
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Beyond The Barricade
Sat at 12am, £19.50 - £21.50
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

The Lion The Witch And The Wardrobe
Fri at 10.15am, 2.30pm, Sat at 2pm, Mon at 2.30pm, Tue at 10.15am, 2.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, Thu at 10.15am, 2.30pm, £27.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

The Singular Exploits Of Sherlock Holmes
Thu at 7.30pm, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Jack And The Beanstalk
Sat at 2.30pm, 6.30pm, Mon at 10.30am, 1.30pm, Tue at 10.30am, 1.30pm, Wed at 10.30am, 1.30pm, Thu at 10.30am, 1.30pm, Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

That'll Be The Day Christmas Show 2015
Sat at 7.30pm - 10pm, £25
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Andy Williams' Christmas Spectacular Starring The Osmonds
Thu at 7.30pm, £27.50 - £150
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Peter Pan
Sat at 2.30pm, 7.15pm, Sun at 2pm, 6pm, Tue - Thu at 2.30pm, 7.15pm, £17 - £31.50
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Dynamo
Until Sun, times vary 33.20 - £99.70
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Hairspray
Mon - Thu at 7pm, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

COMEDY

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Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

It's panto time, from Smee to you



Get ready for a Chuckle or two — The Chuckle Brothers with John Altman as Captain Hook and Ross Carpenter as Peter Pan

PANTOMIME season is here, oh yes it is, with Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's swashbuckling panto Peter Pan opening on Saturday and running until January 24.

Produced by Qdos Entertainment, the world's biggest panto producer, this year's Christmas show stars family favourites The Chuckle Brothers as Paul and Barry Smee, EastEnders actor John Altman as Captain Hook, Coronation Street's Lucy Evans as

Tinkerbell and newcomer Ross Carpenter as Peter Pan.

Showbiz veterans Paul and Barry Elliott, real life brothers better known to millions as The Chuckle Brothers, are regular favourites at Wolverhampton, performing at the Grand Theatre every year as part of the UK tours. It has been 22 years since Paul and Barry were last at the Grand for a panto season.

In 1993 they played the Henchmen

in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs alongside Linda Lusardi and Stu Francis.

John Altman is best known as 'Nasty' Nick Cotton in EastEnders and was among the show's original cast in 1985. Lucy Evans played the role of Lauren Wilson in long-running ITV soap Coronation Street.

Tickets can be booked by calling 01902 42 92 12 or online at the www.grandtheatre.co.uk website.

Back to the 60s with Hairspray



WELCOME to the 60s when the cast of Hairspray lacquer up their beehives and quiffs for a soul-singing and dancing alternative to panto in the West Midlands this festive season.

Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre will play host to the musical which will star Benidorm favourite Tony Maudsley in a frock as Edna Turnblad, a role played by John Travolta in the movie version of the show.

Hairspray is being performed 22 times at the venue from December 14 to January 2 as part of a national tour. Set in 1962 Baltimore, Hairspray tells the story of high school student Tracy and her dreams to dance her way on to national TV and break the colour bar that stops black and white youngsters dancing together. Freya Sutton will play Tracy, for which she won acclaim during the show's UK tour in 2013.

Tony Maudsley is best known as hairdresser Kenneth in the Costa Del Sol-set TV comedy series and can also be seen in The Job Lot. Ex-Blue Peter presenter Peter Duncan will play Edna's ever-loving husband Wilbur and Liverpoolian actress Claire Sweeney will play villainous Velma Von Tussle with X Factor star Brenda Edwards as Motormouth Maybelle.

General manager of the New Alexandra Theatre, Andrew Lister, said: "We always feel we have a unique offering here at the venue for the festive period and this year is no exception."

Hairspray won eight Tony Awards on Broadway and had a hit run in the West End where the Ednas included Michael Ball, Phil Jupitus and Brian Conley.

Merry times with festive laughter

LAUGH your way into the season with veteran comic Ken Dodd celebrating 60 years in showbiz with his Laughter Show at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Sunday. Don't anticipate an early night as the Liverpoolian comedian has a reputation for giving plenty of value for money.

Ed Byrne is at the Wulfrun Hall tonight (Thu), the same night that Mock The Week regular Andy Parsons is at Birmingham Town Hall. Paddy McGuinness talks about fatherhood in his Daddy McGuinness show at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Saturday. Canadian comedian Tom Stace, who used to live in the Black Country, is at the Wulfrun Hall on Wednesday.

String along for a plucky performance

THE Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain celebrate 30 Plucking Years at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Monday. Expect a fun time with eight ukuleles, 16 hands and 32 strings, and one happy audience.

There's an audience with the Bard of Salford when punk poet John Cooper Clarke brings his sharp wit to the Wulfrun Hall on Sunday.

On Monday vocal group Only Men Aloud present their Christmas show at Birmingham Town Hall. Jools Holland and his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra have sold out their December 17 gig at the Symphony Hall.

Easy listening stars are out and about

KING of the waltz, Dutch violinist André Rieu brings his Johann Strauss Orchestra to the Genting Arena on Wednesday.

It's Christmas Party time with The Overtones at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, tomorrow (Fri) and the Sinatra Centenary concert is at the same venue on Saturday. Christmas with The Neales at Birmingham Town Hall is a Sunday home date for the family group from Britain's Got Talent. Merrill, Jay and Jimmy Osmond recreate the cosy magic of The Andy Williams Christmas Special, the US TV show that made their name, at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Thursday, December 17.



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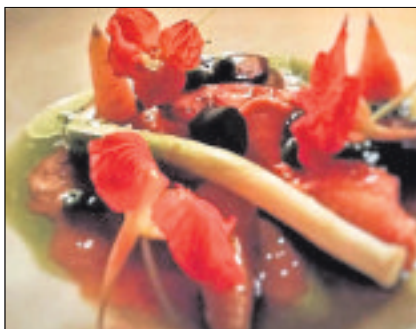


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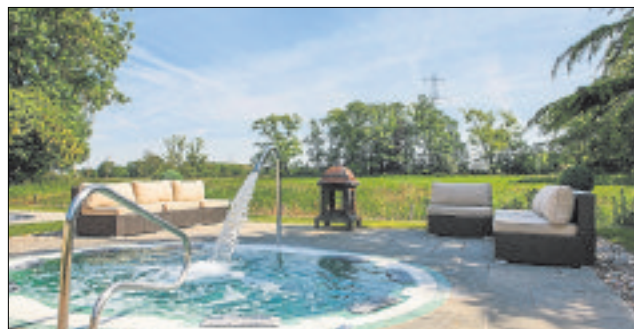
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The lobster dish that helped win Mat regional chef title



Prosecco anyone? Staff will bring you some bubbly to go with your bubbles



The very Parisienne chic decor is perfect for a girls' getaway

This festive treat is a real feast and it's just too, too good to wait for

CHRISTMAS. Yes. It's well and truly hurtling towards us and with it comes the frantic shopping trips and hopes for weather to produce that special ambience only a sprinkling of snow can create. Fingers crossed.

As unpredictable as the British weather may be, Thornton Hall's spa is one place you are guaranteed the white stuff whatever the forecast, albeit in a small corner of Cheshire with the UK's only snow cave.

You can't exactly build a snowman, but fresh powder on your body after a blast in the sauna certainly invigorates the senses – be sure to wear flip flops as due to the chilly floor you'll end up showing off your best Happy Feet penguin impression to people

By Maria Bagnall

looking much cooler than you. Roughly 60 miles from Wolverhampton in The Wirral, the four-star Thornton Hall hotel is within easy reach and an ideal place to base yourself for some festive down time or, as the season demands, stocking up on gifts as it's just five minutes from designer shopping outlet Cheshire Oaks.

Extensive

But there is much, much more to Thornton Hall than its snow cave, extensive gym, spa and outdoor hot tub area where staff bring you Prosecco to wash down your strawberries.

The real treat is in the Lawns Restaurant where its three AA Rosettes for fine dining has attracted an exemplary team to dish up a sublime selection of dishes ranging from

lobster to lamb and a magnificent cheese board with around 40 deliciously whiffy options.

As one of eight regional finalists for the Great British Menu last year, you'd expect something pretty special from chef Matt Worswick's menu and it doesn't disappoint. A hot spot for the regions' finest dining, there are various options to choose from, but as a huge fan of the series it was an unmissable opportunity to tuck into the very same tasty tidbits those lucky judges enjoyed in the finals with the four-course tasting menu and wine to accompany each course – who could resist?

Fellow diners are supposed to have the same menu but with so many options my partner chose from the main menu, giving us a good cross section of dishes.

Describing courses individually would turn this review into a Lord of the Rings

style epic series. Suffice to say each dish was imaginative, presented with perfection containing balanced flavours. I found the whole experience right up my street from the 36-page wine list, a great selection of gins like the Botanist and Hendricks, to views of open countryside from the outdoor hot tubs, an exemplary team of staff throughout the hotel.

Even the bar ladies who served up zingy lemon sherbet cocktails in the opulent bar with metallic low lights, rich embroidered fabrics and cool retro furniture left me a bit lost for words.

But one thing's for sure, Thornton Hall is a feast for the senses in every sense of the word and deserving of its exemplary reputation. I'll definitely be heading back...and won't be waiting until next winter.

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Saturday Night Theatre from £169.⁹⁵

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels (hotel supplements may apply) and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

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Theatre Showstopper from £239.⁹⁵

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening.

Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel of your choice (hotel supplements may apply). Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

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Selected weekend departures

Saturday Night from £149.⁹⁵

Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £159.⁹⁵

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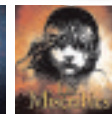
For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the show to see an evening performance.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel plus full English breakfast.

Pick-up points offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single rooms subject to availability – supplements apply.

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CHOICE



Rita Ora

The X Factor (ITV, 8pm)

The three finalists assemble for the first of this weekend's live Grand Final shows. Weeks of lively auditions, gruelling boot camps and nerve-jangling live shows come to a head over the next two nights, but before the winner is named, the would-be pop-stars must first make it through two more showdowns, as judges Simon Cowell, Rita Ora, Cheryl Fernandez-Versini and Nick Grimshaw are once again called upon to deliver their verdict on each act's singing prowess. The act with the lowest public-vote figures will face an early exit from the contest. Naturally, the stakes are the highest they've ever been for the hopeful pop icons, and as ever, presenter duo Olly Murs and Caroline Flack are on hand to provide moral support.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Simply Nagella. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Lewis Hamilton: Making History - F1 2015 Review. **2.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.00** Film: Toy Story. (1995) Pixar animated adventure, with the voice of Tom Hanks. **4.15** Final Score. **5.15** Celebrity Mastermind. (R) **5.45** BBC News. **5.55** Regional Programme. **6.00** **Pointless Celebrities.** Louis Theroux, Nancy Strang, Michael Underwood, Angellica Bell, Calum Best, Angie Best, Gary Lineker and Harry Lineker take part in a family-themed edition of the quiz. **6.50** **Strictly Come Dancing.** Only five couples remain as the pro-celebrity dancing contest reaches the semi-finals, and with a shot at a place in the final on the line, the challenge is increased to match the stakes. This week, Craig Revel Horwood, Bruno Tonioli, Len Goodman and Darcey Bussell have challenged the contestants to master two routines. Latin and Ballroom, with the judges providing their verdict after each performance. Once the stars have had both their turns on the dance-floor, the lines will be opened for viewers to cast their votes. Tomorrow, the bottom two couples will be asked to take part in a nerve-racking dance-off, which will ultimately determine which of them will not be claiming a place in the grand final next weekend. **8.30** **Casualty.** Connie refuses to let her personal life interfere with her duties as clinical lead, but in doing so, she ends up dismissing Jacob's concerns about a very real problem. **9.20** **The National Lottery Live.** Ore Oduba presents as the all-important winning numbers are revealed. **9.30** **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special.** Mrs Brown tries to work out what is inside a parcel addressed to Cathy and discovers Rory is planning to have plastic surgery. (R) **10.00** BBC News; Weather. **10.20** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents; National Lottery Update. **11.40** **The Apprentice.** (R) **12.40** **The Apprentice.** (R) **12.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Race to Super Bowl 50. (R) **6.55** Film: Anything But Christmas. (2012) **8.25** Film: Ray Harryhausen: Special Effects Titan. (2011) **10.00** Animal Park. (R) **10.30** Kangaroo Dundee. (R) **11.00** Ronnie's Animal Crackers. (R) **11.30** Ronnie's Animal Crackers. (R) **12.00** James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **12.45** James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **1.30** James Martin - Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **2.15** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **3.00** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.15** Flog It! **5.15** Euro 2016 Draw. Live coverage from Paris. **6.30** **The Great Pottery Throw Down.** The four remaining potters compete in the final with Kate Malone and Keith Brymer Jones presenting them with their most technically demanding challenge in the Main Make when they have to make an original 12-piece tea set out of porcelain. For their Spot Test, they must cut intricate and decorative designs into leather hard porcelain using a technique known as 'the devil's work', and for the Throw Down they have just 20 minutes to make three high-shouldered jugs - one of the hardest shapes to throw at the wheel. Last in the series. (R) **7.30** **Japan: Earth's Enchanted Islands.** Michelle Dockery narrates an exploration of the Ryukyu Islands in south-west Japan, revealing unexpected stories of isolation, unique wildlife and unsolved mysteries. (R) **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring sets up an observation post in the local lighthouse and annoys the ARP wardens by flooding the whole town with light during an air raid. (R) **9.00** **Qi XL.** Jimmy Carr, Aisling Bea and Danny Bhoj compete alongside resident panellist Alan Davies, as question master Stephen Fry muddles through the middle show of the middle series. **9.45** **TOTP2: Christmas 2015.** Christmas-themed hits from the archive, including songs by Tom Jones, Adele, Wizard, Slide, Wham, Jona Lewie, the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl, Shakira Stevens, Pulp and Cilla Black. **12.50** Film: The Winslow Boy. (1999) **2.30** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oodibods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.40** Judge Rinder. (R) **2.40** Film: The Polar Express. (2004) **4.30** Doc Martin. (R) **5.35** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** Catchphrase Celebrity Special. **6.45** **ITV News:** Weather. **7.00** **The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Jimi Mistry, Gemma Atkinson, Nadia Sawalha and James Cosmo answer general knowledge questions and work together to tackle quiz genius the Chaser and secure a cash prize for charity. Last in the series. **8.00** **The X Factor.** The three finalists assemble for the first of this weekend's live Grand Final shows. Weeks of lively auditions, gruelling boot camps and nerve-jangling live shows come to a head over the next two nights, but before the winner is named, the would-be pop-stars must first make it through two more showdowns, as judges Simon Cowell, Rita Ora, Cheryl Fernandez-Versini and Nick Grimshaw are once again called upon to deliver their verdict on each act's singing prowess. The act with the lowest public-vote figures will face an early exit from the contest this evening, bowing out in third place. Naturally, the stakes are the highest they've ever been for the hopeful pop icons, and as ever, presenter duo Olly Murs and Caroline Flack are on hand to provide some much-needed moral support on-stage. By the end of tomorrow evening, one of the two remaining acts will claim their place in the spotlight as this year's winner. **10.05** **The Jonathan Ross Show.** **11.10** **ITV News:** Weather. **11.30** **Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Burt Reynolds.** (R) **12.20** Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Anglesy Sandman Triathlon. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing Live coverage from Cheltenham and Doncaster. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.05** **Come Dine with Me.** Fun-loving salesman Charlie Spiteri hosts the final festive dinner party in south-east London, hoping to impress his guests with a three-bird roast and a snow machine. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **The World's Weirdest Weather.** Weather conditions that cause fish to be washed ashore in India and draws sharks to the coast of Brisbane. Plus, an unusually heavy snowfall in Tucson, Arizona and strange circles in the Namibian desert, as well as footage of hailstorms, lightning and thunder storms. **8.00** **Grand Designs.** Kevin McCloud follows software executive Andy and garden designer Nicki, who are planning to build a "floating" house on the Thames, which would be the first of its kind in the UK. (R) **9.00** **Film: Red 2.** (2013) Premiere. Former CIA agent Frank Moses reunites his squad of retired operatives for a vital mission. A devastatingly powerful new weapon has been stolen, and it falls to Frank's team to retrieve it - which means facing lethal assassins, terrorists and corrupt government officials out to steal the device. Action thriller spoof, starring Bruce Willis, Helen Mirren and John Malkovich. **11.15** **TFI Friday.** Martin Freeman, Idris Elba, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott. James Bay, Rita Ora and Sigma join Chris Evans for the entertainment show mixing music and chat with stunts and skits. (R) **12.20** Adam Hills: Happyism Live. (R) **1.15** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.10** Fargo. (R) **3.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.30** River Cottage Bites. (R) **5.40** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **9.30** The Saturday Show. **11.30** Film: Santa Who? (2000) **1.20** Film: The Perfect Holiday. (2007) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Morris Chestnut and Gabrielle Union. **3.10** Film: The Nine Lives of Christmas. (2014) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Brandon Routh and Kimberly Sustad. **4.55** Film: Once Upon a Christmas. (2000) Premiere. Family drama, starring Kathy Ireland. **6.35** **5 News Weekend.** **6.40** **Punnett Fails, Falls & Flops.** **7.05** **Police Interceptors.** An officer tackles a drunken youth in a domestic dispute, a speeding motorist causes chaos after crashing into a gas main, and Doug gets to grips with a burglar. (R) **8.00** **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** In the final episode of the series, Stewart and Ian head to Nottingham to recover a debt of nearly £3,000 in unpaid rent. In East London, Paul and Phil head to a flat expecting a routine eviction, but get more than they bargained for when they find dodgy wiring, illegal substances, and two men sleeping in squalid conditions. Meanwhile, Stewart and Victor hunt down one of their biggest debts of the year - £66,000 owed by a businessman. Finally, in West London, Steve and Ben try to evict a tenant who has broken the terms of her lease, but suspect a subletting scam when they find that the three-bedroom semi has been converted into tiny bedsits. Last in the series. (R) **9.00** **Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's top matches, including Hull City v Bolton Wanderers at the KC Stadium and Middlesbrough v Birmingham City at the Riverside in the Championship. Plus, all the goals from League One and League Two, a round-up of the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers. **10.25** **The Definitive History of Star Wars.** (R) **11.25** **How Star Wars Changed the World.** (R) **12.25** **The Gadget Show Christmas Special.** (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Crackers About Christmas. (R) **4.00** Kids' Hospital at Christmas. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Live at the Apollo **9.30** Film: 8 Mile (2002) **11.15** Family Guy **1.50** Josh **2.20** Asian Provocateur **2.50** Great Movie Mistakes III: Not in 3D **3.00** Together **4.00** Close **4.00** Close **BBC Four** **7.00** Empire of the Seas: How the Navy Forged the Modern World **8.00** Britain's Outlaws: Highwaymen, Pirates and Rogues **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** Jeff Lynne's ELO in Concert **12.00** Mr Blue Sky: The Story of Jeff Lynne and ELO **1.00** Top of the Pops: 1990 **1.40** Rollerama: Britain's Biggest Boy Band **2.40** TOTP2: Boy Bands **3.35** Close **ITV2** **11.35** The Xtra Factor **12.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Coming Out **1.40** Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas **2.40** Scorpion **3.35** You've Been Framed at Christmas! **4.35** Take Me Out Celebrity Christmas Special **5.45** Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **7.40** Film: Back to the Future Part III (1990) **10.05** The Xtra Factor **11.05** Celebrity Juice Christmas Special **12.05** Release The Hounds: Jungle Hell II **1.05** Viral Tap **1.40** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Animal Practice **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **11.50** Rosemary & Thyme **12.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **2.55** A Touch of Frost **4.55** Film: Columbo: Last Salute to the Commodore (1976) **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Lewis **12.05** A Touch of Frost **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4** **2.35** Film: Blues Brothers 2000 (1998) **5.00** The Car Chasers **6.00** Fifth Gear **7.00** Storage Wars: New York **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Film: Hard to Kill (1990) **11.05** Film: The Quest (1996) **1.00** Film: The Sentinel (2006) **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **2.05** Melissa & Joey **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** Film: City of Ember (2008) **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Paul (2011) **11.05** Gogglebox **1.15** The Inbetweeners **2.20** The IT Crowd **3.15** How I Met Your Mother **4.00** Revenge **Film4** **1.00** The Dark Crystal (1982) **2.50** The Rugrats Movie (1998) **4.25** Earthquake (1974) **6.50** Field of Dreams (1989) **9.00** Insidious: Chapter 2 (2013) **11.10** Shutter Island (2010) **1.35** The Keep (1983) **3.35** Close

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CHOICE



Tim Peake

Horizon: Tim Peake Special – How to Be an Astronaut (BBC2, 8pm)
Tim Peake is a European Space Agency astronaut who has been preparing for blast-off for two years. The former British Army Air Corps officer has spent that period being followed by a BBC camera crew who, if the resulting documentary is anything to go by, appear to have recorded his every moment. Peake also narrates the programme, offering enthralling insights into what it is to put your life on the line so you can journey into space. He also introduces us to his fellow mission crew members, Nasa's Tim Kopra and Roscosmos cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko, who have both flown before and have experienced spacewalks while working on the construction of the Space Station.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Lord Ashdown. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Saving the Forgotten Jews. **1.45** Lifestile. **1.55** Rio It! (R) **2.45** Film: Toy Story 2. (1999) **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** The Hunt. (R) **5.50** BBC News.
6.10 **Regional Programme.**
6.20 **Countryside.** Ellie Harrison and Matt Baker explore the Dark Peak and the White Peak in Derbyshire, visiting the caverns made by the erosion from rainwater and going in search of England's only population of mountain hares. Sean Fletcher reports on the renovation of Haddon Hall. Adam Henson presents a look at the history of tractors, and Tom Heap discovers how wild boar have returned to the Forest of Dean. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.
7.20 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** The five remaining couples gather for one last elimination show, as the least successful couples face a dance-off. Plus, Kylie Minogue performs with the professional dancers.
8.00 **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents the second of two episodes from Balmoral, where she takes a tour of the grounds in a 1953 land rover and watches archive footage of the royal family. Valuables brought in to be viewed include a collection of medals from both World Wars presented to a man who also rescued survivors from the Titanic, an art nouveau mirror and a 16th-century bottle that survived being unearthed by a digger.
9.00 **The Hunt.** Efforts to protect endangered predators, looking at the precarious future for species on five continents, including lions, tigers, polar bears and blue whales. Last in the series.
10.00 **BBC News.**
10.20 **Regional Programme.**
10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman presents action from today's Premier League matches.
11.40 **Citizen Khan.** As Mr Khan enters the Great Sparkhill Bake Off, Mrs Khan worries that Alia's new boyfriend sounds too rough. (R)
12.10 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.15 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.45** Countryside. (R) **8.45** An Island Parish: Falklands. (R) **9.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.45** James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **11.30** James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Film: Jason and the Argonauts. (1963) Fantasy adventure, starring Todd Armstrong. **2.45** Family Finders. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Continent. (R) **4.15** Athletics: European Cross Country Highlights. **5.20** Film: Nativity! (2009) Comedy, starring Martin Freeman.
7.00 **Celebrity Antiques Road Trip.** TV chef Ainsley Harriott and presenter Anne Diamond take on the antiques-hunting challenge. Travelling in and around London on their search for auction-worthy items, Anne finds out why Britain became a nation of tea-lovers and Ainsley learns about the world's first celebrity chef. (R)
8.00 **Horizon: Tim Peake Special – How to Be an Astronaut.** A video diary filmed over two years by Tim Peake, who will become the first British astronaut to board the International Space Station on 15 December. His personal footage details some of the risks and pressures he faces, as well as the rigorous training required to go into space, including replicating spacewalks and training to deal with the physical dangers of weightlessness, undergoing exercises in the Soyuz capsule and space station mockups, and preparing to spend time away from his wife and two sons.
9.00 **The Secret History of the British Garden.** Monty Don concludes the series by exploring how gardening has developed over the past 100 years, and how horticulture has become a key part of Britain's economy. Last in the series.
10.00 **Professor Green: Suicide and Me.** The rapper explores the circumstances surrounding his father's suicide and investigates why suicide is the biggest killer of males under the age of 45 in Britain. Previously shown on BBC3.
11.00 **Film: Seven Years in Tibet.** (1997) Fact-based drama, starring Brad Pitt and David Thewlis.
1.10 Sign Zone: Countryside. (R) **2.05** Holby City. (R) **3.05** James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R) **3.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. **8.00** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.30** Marvel Super Heroes: Maximum Overload. (R) **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.40** Film: Evil Under the Sun. (1982) Mystery, starring Peter Ustinov. **3.00** The X Factor. (R) **5.00** Film: The Scorpion King. (2002) Fantasy action adventure, starring Dwayne Johnson.
6.35 **Regional Programme; Weather.**
6.45 **ITV News: Weather.**
7.00 **Jekyll and Hyde.** Part two of two. Robert goes in search of his former ally, the vigilante Spring Heeled Jack, and the mysterious parasite that has taken control of him. However, the creature abandons its host and take over Ravi, who now faces either a painful death when it is finished with him or being killed by MIO agents in an attempt to destroy the infection. Robert tries to find a way to save his brother, while also using the parasite as bait to lure Bulstrode into a trap and rid himself of MIO once and for all.
8.00 **The X Factor.** Caroline Flack and Oily Murs host the climax of the singing contest from the SSE Arena, Wembley. A host of special guests will be appearing on stage before the results of the viewers' votes are tallied up and this year's winner is announced. The performer in question will get to record this year's X Factor single – a cover version of Bob Dylan's classic song Forever Young. Last in the series.
10.00 **The World According to Kenny Everett.** Profile of the comedian and DJ, featuring classic clips from his TV shows, never-before-seen archive footage, and contributions from family, friends and colleagues.
11.00 **ITV News: Weather.**
11.15 **The Chase.** Bradley Walsh presents. (R)
12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** Beat the Sun 2015. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** Film: Marley and Me. (2008) Comedy drama based on journalist John Grogan's account of life with a mischievous golden Labrador he bought for his wife. Starring Owen Wilson, Jennifer Aniston and Kathleen Turner. **5.20** Film: Aladdin. (1992) A street urchin happens across a magical lamp, home to a genie with the ability to grant wishes. Disney animated adventure, with the voices of Robin Williams and Scott Weinger.
7.00 **Channel 4 News.**
7.30 **Britain's Wildest Weather 2015.** Documentary featuring footage of unusual weather conditions in the past year shot by members of the public, including freak hailstorms, 113mph winds, deadly lightning strikes and even a tornado. The programme includes interviews with those involved, including tanker pilots, mountain rescue teams, weather watchers and hikers.
9.00 **Homeland.** Allison is placed under interrogation, and Carrie and Astrid decide to search for Quinn. Thriller following a team of CIA agents, starring Claire Danes and Miranda Otto.
10.00 **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.05 **Film: Mama.** (2013) A couple take in two orphans left alone in the woods, unaware a supernatural horror, starring Jessica Chastain and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau.
12.55 Grand Designs Australia. Peter Maddison meets couple Jason Bretell and Jennifer Pancari, as they set about restoring a 150-year-old cottage in the Melbourne suburb of Williamstown. (R) **1.45** Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners. Featuring a vintage-stall owner who has filled sheds, a gazebo and much of her house with her hoard, and a woman whose home has not had a deep clean in 12 years. (R) **2.40** Four in a Bed. (R) **5.05** Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer revisit Matt Rushworth, who wanted to settle down in Windsor. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Ticky Toc. (R) **6.55** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Roorbarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.15** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.25** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.40** Little Princess. (R) **8.00** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.10** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **9.05** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.20** Jilly Jamm. (R) **9.40** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football League Tonight. (R) **12.00** Funnist Falls, Falls & Flops. (R) **12.35** Film: The Christmas Shepherd. (2014) Drama, starring Teri Polo. **2.20** Film: Meet the Santas. (2005) Fantasy comedy sequel, with Steve Guttenberg. **4.05** Film: Mrs Miracle 2: Miracle in Manhattan. (2010) Family drama sequel, starring Doris Roberts.
6.00 **Film: A Country Christmas Story.** (2013) Premiere. A teenager from the Appalachian mountains dreams of being a country singer, but her mother does not approve of her ambitions. She defies her family to take part in a concert organised by Dolly Parton at her theme park, and the journey opens her eyes to the history of country music. Musical, starring Desiree Ross and Megyn Price, with Parton as herself.
7.35 **Film: Scrooge.** (1970) Hard-hearted Victorian miser Ebenezer Scrooge refuses to join in with the spirit of the festive season – until a succession of spectral visitors turn up to teach him the error of his ways. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic A Christmas Carol, starring Albert Finney, Alec Guinness, Kenneth More, Edith Evans and Paddy Stone.
9.55 **5 News Weekend.**
10.00 **Film: The Blind Side.** (2009) Premiere. A couple take in a homeless teenager and help him fund his education and train to be an American football player. Fact-based drama, with Sandra Bullock and Quinton Aaron.
12.30 Who Killed Santa: True Crimes. A homeless man is murdered. (R) **1.05** SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10** Danger: Teen Bingers. Young people who are obese. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. A flat in Kensal Green, west London. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Film: Enemy of the State (1998) **11.05** Family Guy **12.30** Josh **1.00** Rent a Cop **1.30** Siblings **3.00** Together **4.00** Close
BBC Four
7.00 Blood and Gold: The Making of Spain with Simon Sebag Montefiore **8.00** Ballrooms and Ballerinas: Dance at the BBC **9.00** Dance Rebels: A Story of Modern Dance **10.30** Film: Easy Money II (2012) **12.05** Storyville: Russia's Toughest Prison – The Condemned **1.25** Treasures of the Anglo-Saxons **2.25** The Mary Rose: A Timewatch Guide **3.25** Close
ITV2
11.15 The X Factor **1.20** The Xtra Factor **2.20** Merry Christmas Mr Bean **2.55** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **4.50** Catchphrase Christmas Special **5.50** Film: Peter Pan (2003) **8.00** Film: The Nutty Professor (1996) **10.00** The Xtra Factor **11.00** Film: Keith Lemon: The Film (2012) **12.50** Viral Tap **1.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **1.55** Animal Practice **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.55 Film: Columbo: Last Salute to the Commodore (1976) **2.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.55** Midsomer Murders: Ghosts of Christmas Past **7.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Midsomer Murders **12.05** Film: Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **2.25** Wycliffe **3.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale
ITV4
3.05 Film: No Name on the Bullet (1959) **4.45** Film: Jeremiah Johnson (1972) **7.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special **8.00** Football Dream Debuts **9.00** Film: The Day of the Jackal (1973) **11.55** Film: Quadrophonia (1979) **2.20** Prawn Stars **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
12.30 Film: Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events (2004) **2.35** Rude(ish) Tube **3.00** Couples Come Dine with Me **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** Film: Twilight (2008) **9.00** The Big Bang Theory **10.30** The Inbetweeners **11.35** The IT Crowd **12.40** First Dates **1.40** Gogglebox **2.40** Rules of Engagement **Film4**
11.00 Love Story (1970) **1.00** Pom Poko (1994) **3.35** King Kong (1976) **6.25** A Knight's Tale (2001) **9.00** Taken 2 (2012) **10.50** Repo Men (2010) **1.00** Copycat (1995) **3.30** Close

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NEW



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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Christmas Switch, Channel 5, 3.45pm
Premiere. A hustler begins to rethink his outlook on life when he agrees to magically swap bodies with a dying man at Christmas. Fantasy, starring Brian Krause and Cedric Smith. (2014)

TUESDAY
Mr Miracle, Channel 5, 2.05pm
A trainee guardian angel is sent to Earth to help people, but quickly finds he has a lot to learn about human behaviour. Undaunted, he chooses as his first assignment a woman whose father has recently died, making a bumbling attempt to boost her confidence so she can make a fresh start. Fantasy comedy, starring Rob Morrow and Britt Irvin. (2014)

WEDNESDAY
A Star for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A baker's life is thrown into chaos by a recent break-up and her co-worker leaving her to cope alone during a busy period. Things look up when she falls in love with a handsome customer, but does not realise he is a movie star in town to shoot a film. Meanwhile, her ex-boyfriend is less than happy about her new romance. Drama, starring Briana Evigan. (2012)



Al: Artificial Intelligence, Friday, BBC2, 11.05pm

THURSDAY
Christmas Wishes, Channel 5, 2.05pm
A teacher at a boarding school agrees to look after troubled students who are unable to go home for the Christmas holidays. His career is threatened when a pupil vandalises a beloved local tree where people can leave their handwritten wishes, but he rallies the townsfolk to repair the damage. Family drama, starring Jason Gedrick and Richard Harmon. (2012)

FRIDAY
Al: Artificial Intelligence, BBC2, 11.05pm
A highly advanced robotic boy is created with one purpose – to love his owner as a parent. When he is rejected by his "mother", he is left to roam the bleak landscapes of a futuristic America with a fellow android, searching for a means of becoming a real boy in the hope of regaining her love. Steven Spielberg's sci-fi drama, starring Haley Joel Osment, Jude Law, William Hurt and Frances O'Connor. (2001)

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PICK OF THE WEEK 27

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, December 10, 2015

Idris Elba stars in Luther, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Las Vegas with Trevor McDonald
ITV, 9pm
The broadcaster continues his exploration of the American city by tracking down Andrew Didonato, a former New York mobster hiding out in Vegas, but who is about to quit town for a new life. Over on the Strip, Trevor meets former showgirl Lisa Medford at the Riviera, a casino and hotel that once played host to Elvis and the Rat Pack but is now shutting its doors for the final time, before sitting in on a poker game with Antonio Esfandiari, one of the world's most successful professional players.

The Best of Bad TV: The 70s
Channel 5, 10pm
A trawl through the decade's programmes, featuring clips of car-crash interviews, terrifying children's dramas, hoaxes and baffling game shows. Limited technology and low budgets led to memorably poor special effects in sci-fi shows, while soaps tried to escape the grim realities of strikes, unease and civil unrest. There were also memorable clashes between music stars and TV presenters, from David Bowie to the Sex Pistols. Contributors include Gareth Thomas, Paul Darrow, Jane Rossington, Tony Adams, Paul Henry, Peter Purves and Valerie Singleton.

TUESDAY
Stargazing Live: Brit in Space
BBC2, 7pm
Dara O Briain and Professor Brian Cox present coverage of British astronaut Tim Peake's arrival at the International Space Station. At London's Science Museum, Dara and Brian will be joined by experts, including former ISS commander Chris Hadfield and Britain's first astronaut, Helen Sharman. They'll share insights into what it's like living in space and what Tim will face from his first night on the ISS. Plus, Dallas Campbell reports live from Kazakhstan with Tim's first phone call home from space.

WEDNESDAY
Journey Down the Yukon – A Soldier's Challenge
BBC2, 7pm
Nine years after being blown up in Afghanistan, Ben Parkinson, one of Britain's most wounded soldiers, takes on a mission to canoe down one of the world's most remote river systems, Canada's Yukon River. The soldier had both legs amputated and was left with a severe brain injury after the

explosion in 2006, with medical staff warning him that he may never walk or talk again. However, he is defying the odds by taking on the expedition, where all that stands in his way are bears, wolves and rapids – and the battle with his own damaged and broken body.

Las Vegas with Trevor McDonald, Monday, ITV, 9pm

reach an All Time High with Rita Coolidge? Well, now we can find out as ITV brings counts down the nation's 20 favourite Bond themes, while also hearing some of the stories behind the songs from contributors including Paul McCartney, Duran Duran, A-ha and lyricists Leslie Bricusse and Don Black. A host of celebrities will be revealing their personal favourites, and we get to hear how Sam Smith recently gave the series its first ever UK number one with Writing's On the Wall.

FRIDAY
Text Santa Christmas Jumper Day
ITV, 8pm
Phillip Schofield, Holly Willoughby and Amanda Holden lead a host of stars rallying support for this year's charities – Macmillan Cancer Support, Make-A-Wish UK and Save the Children. Highlights include a visit to Coronation Street with a Text Santa twist, Ninja Warrior receiving the star treatment when a line-up of celebrities take on The Wall, plus Lord Grantham having a tough decision to make in a Downton Abbey special. Alesha Dixon, Caroline Flack, Christine Bleakley, Oily Murs, Paddy McGuinness and Stephen Mulhern also feature amid the music, surprises and special guests.

CHRONICLE

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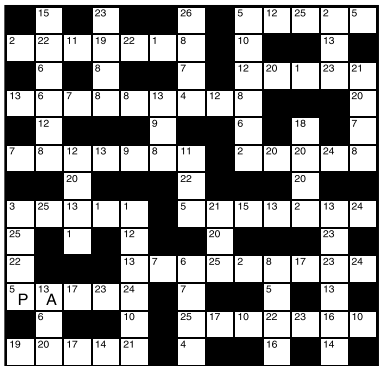
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BRAIN GYM No.355

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

F	G	C	H	N	W	M	Z	V	U	K	Q	O
L	E	A	Y	B	P	S	X	T	R	D	I	J

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

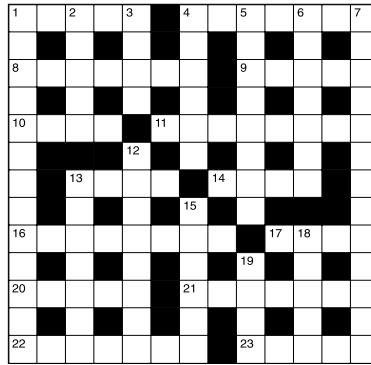
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Supports the defenders on the field (5)
- Operates the hoisting device and stops (5,2)
- 8 & 9Ac. Express opinions on the radio? (3,4,5)
- See 8 Across
- The infant has nothing to use as a trumpet (4)
- Select fish for preserving (8)
- Strike a kind of link (4)
- Kitty indicates the lido (4)
- 16 & 21Ac. How the dutiful minister signs himself (8,7)
- In the Bible Saul conceals one of the patriarchs (4)
- The return of the Hebrew maiden will make one complain (5)
- See 16 Across
- Took up permanent residence and paid (7)
- Goes to war for financial rewards (5)

Down

- What record-breaking jumpers do at Rogationtide (4,3,6)
- Leave the vehicle first - it's put in the hold (5)
- Decline a piece of kitchen equipment (4)
- Part of the flower I split badly (6)
- Romantic entanglement? (4-4)
- Particular place is rearranged (7)
- They've already had some degree of success (4-9)
- One in authority - and that's not just hearsay (8)
- Is it smoked by the great man in bed? (7)
- Not accustomed to mint (6)
- A bit of unceremonious language (5)
- One bird or a hundred on the line (4)



Quick Clues:

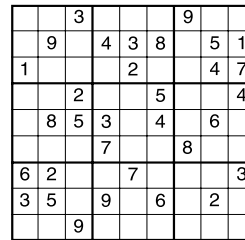
Across

- Sea (5)
- Go down (7)
- Envious (7)
- Wrong (5)
- Cook (4)
- Act imperiously (8)
- Cupid (4)
- Fair (4)
- Repulsive (8)
- Chief (4)
- Well done! (5)
- Incorrect (7)
- Ingredient (7)
- Terror (5)

Down

- Unpleasant (13)
- Elude (5)
- Midday (4)
- Dictator (6)
- Roomy (8)
- Obvious (7)
- Noted differences (13)
- Despair (4,4)
- Rival (7)
- Whimsical (6)
- Conscious (5)
- Group of animals (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	2	7	1	5	3	8	9	6
9	6	8	7	2	4	5	1	3
3	1	5	6	8	9	2	4	7
2	3	4	9	7	6	1	8	5
8	5	1	3	4	2	6	7	9
7	9	6	8	1	5	4	3	2
6	7	2	4	9	1	3	5	8
5	4	9	2	3	8	7	6	1
1	8	3	5	6	7	9	2	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 3 Direction; 8 Rear; 9 Mini-skirt; 10 Pathos; 11 Aegis; 14 Links; 15 Nude; 16 Easel; 18 Eats; 20 Infer; 21 Scale; 24 Parish; 25 Schematic; 26 Dean; 27 Orangade. Down: 1 Propeller; 2 Castanets; 4 Isis; 5 Elite; 6 Take in; 7 Cars; 9 Mouse; 11 Aisle; 12 Surf-rider; 13 Near thing; 17 Lilac; 19 Screen; 22 Leave; 23 Scar; 24 Pied. QUICK - Across: 3 Speculate; 8 Omit; 9 Interment; 10 Treads; 11 Trend; 14 Spoil; 15 Time; 16 Lapse; 18 Mend; 20 Rogue; 21 Defer; 24 Moving; 25 Excavator; 26 Lean; 27 Certitude. Down: 1 Loathsome; 2 Hidebound; 4 Pens; 5 Clear; 6 Lament; 7 Tune; 9 Idyll; 11 Taper; 12 Disguised; 13 Detergent; 17 Error; 19 Depart; 22 Enact; 23 Axle; 24 Mood.

Thinking space

Quiz

- Which ceremony takes place during the 3rd week of July on the Thames?
- In which Dickens novel does the quotation "Barkis is willin" appear?
- In which country was the Rosetta stone found?
- In what sort of building would you find a rood screen?
- In which London park is Rotten Row?
- What sort of animal is a drongo?
- What is the former residence of the Moorish kings at Seville called?
- What is the Italian name of the city of Turin?
- Who was the youngest of the four Beatles?
- In which country was Israeli politician Menachem Begin born?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Delaware; 2 1962; 3 Alva;

4 Out of condition to fight; 5 Scotland;

6 Andrew Jackson; 7 Jezebel; 8 Kenyan;

9 House sparrow; 10 1975.

Niner: RESULTING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

9717 gives a game,
528869 gives a sport,
9461683 gives another sport.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



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Two-bedroom bungalow with a large conservatory



A DETACHED two-bedroomed bungalow in a cul-de-sac in Reynards Close, Dudley, is for sale through Skitts at £219,950 with no chain.

This well-maintained two bedroom property benefits from central heating, double glazing, garage and a good size conservatory overlooking the attractive rear garden. There is also a driveway with parking for numerous vehicles.

It has an entrance hall, a living room with a gas fire in feature surround, sliding patio doors to a conservatory, a kitchen with wood-effect base units with laminate working surfaces, fitted wall cupboards and ceramic wall tiles, a utility, bedroom one with fitted wardrobes, drawers and a dressing unit and a WC off, bedroom two, a wet room with a white suite, ceramic wall tiling, an extractor, and a chrome heated towel rail and storage.

Contact Skitts on 01902 686868 or visit www.skitts.net website.



Kingswinford semi-detached family house with no chain

THIS three-bedroom semi-detached family home in good decorative order throughout in Mancroft Close, Kingswinford, and for sale through Select Property Management at £199,995 with no chain.

With double glazing, gas central heating, off-road parking and a garage, it has an entrance hall with stairs off, a WC, a lounge with a bay window and a gas fire, a spacious, modern kitchen/diner with an integrated fridge freezer, part laminate flooring, stainless steel splash backs, built in stainless steel oven, hob and extractor. The kitchen/diner opens into a spacious conservatory.

Bedroom one has ceiling spot lighting, bedroom two with laminate flooring and bedroom three with laminate flooring and storage.

The bathroom has spot lighting, tiled flooring and a corner shower cubicle and a bath.

Outside the rear garden has a patio area.

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Spacious period property has a large rear garden



AN individual property, 21 Barnett Street, Wordsley, is an extended period-style detached family home with a long mature rear garden.

Being surprisingly spacious, it is for sale through The Lee Shaw Partnership at £239,950.

With gas central heating and double glazed windows, it briefly comprises an entrance hall with a cellar off, a sitting room and a lounge opening to a dining room.

There is also a breakfast kitchen with a range cooker and appliances, lobby and guest WC, landing, three double bedrooms (two with wardrobes), a re-fitted bathroom with a white suite, carpet and block-paved driveway.

For further information contact The Lee Shaw Partnership on 01384 287622 or visit the website at www.theleeshaw.com



Modern, extended four-bedroom home

A MODERN and extended four-bedroomed detached property in Cherry Hill Walk, Dudley, has a cul-de-sac location.

Having an extended living/dining room and kitchen, it is for sale through Your Move at offers over £260,000.

The double glazed and gas centrally heated dwelling has an entrance porch, entrance hallway, front lounge, extended rear lounge/dining room, a stunning extended kitchen with dark wood-effect attractive modern units and complementary working surfaces, utility room and ground floor guest cloakroom.

Upstairs are four bedrooms, en suite to bedroom one, and a bathroom.

There is a rear lawned garden. Contact Your Move on 01384 455000 or visit www.your-move.co.uk website.



K. Stuart Swash

AUCTION TUESDAY 15th DECEMBER 2015



WOLVERHAMPTON, 140 MERRIDALE ROAD

Imposing Detached Residence

"In & out" entrance drive, Porch, fine Reception Hall large through Lounge, Study / Sun Lounge, 21ft Dining Kitchen, Utility, fitted Cloakroom, Four Bedrooms, one en-suite, magnificent house Bathroom, 33ft Garage, Rear Garden with gazebo. EPC: E.46

Guide: £270,000 / £290,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 11th & 12th DECEMBER @ 10.00 a.m.



130 THE LINDENS, NEWBRIDGE

Easy access to City Centre
Second Floor purpose built Flat
Spacious accommodation with Double Glazing
Private Hall, 14ft Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom
Garage. EPC: F.31

Guide: £48,000/£53,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11th & 12th DECEMBER @ 11.15 a.m.



WOLVERHAMPTON 9 COALWAY GARDENS, MERRY HILL

Pleasant residential cul-de-sac -

Well appointed Detached Bungalow, Double Glazing and Central Heating Fully enclosed Porch, wide Entrance Hall, Lounge with patio doors to Garden, well appointed Kitchen, Rear Hall, Utility, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage, separate Workshop, attractive Gardens. EPC: D.61

Guide: £138,000 / £143,000

VIEWING:

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 11th & 12th DECEMBER @ 12.00 noon



WOLVERHAMPTON 32A BIRCHWOOD ROAD, PENN

First Floor Flat in a popular residential area
Canopy Porch, impressive 14ft Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Pantry
Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage and Garden, EPC: G.5

Guide: £50,000 / £55,000

VIEWING - Please Note: Access at rear via Ryecroft Avenue

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 11th & 12th DECEMBER @ 11.00 a.m.



WOLVERHAMPTON 71 OWEN ROAD, PENN FIELDS

Large Mid Terraced House with Gas Central Heating
Enclosed Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Store, Kitchen, Utility, GF Bathroom, Three Double Bedrooms. EPC: TBA
Garden to rear

Guide: £53,000 / £58,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 11th & 12th DECEMBER @ 10.30 a.m.



WOLVERHAMPTON, 419 STAFFORD ROAD, OXLEY

Investment Property

Detached Bungalow, prominent position
Spacious accommodation, Gas Central Heating
Enclosed Porch, wide Hall, 20ft. Lounge, Dining Room, Two Verandahs, Kitchen, Store

Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, 14ft. Loft Room
Garage, off-road Parking, attractive Garden, EPC: TBA
Please Note: This property is offered subject to a Life Tenancy with no passing rental

Guide: £58,000 / £63,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY 11th DECEMBER @ 2.30 p.m.

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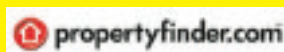
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SEDGLEY
Dudley Road

NEW

A beautifully presented 1930's Detached house having lots of character and original features. The accommodation briefly comprises: Porch, entrance hall, THREE reception rooms, large modern fitted kitchen, Storage cupboard, WC and garage, split-top staircase leading to the first floor offering 5 bedrooms, en-suite, large family bathroom. Ample driveway to the front. Walking distance to the village of Sedgley, good schools and local amenities. EPC - Ordered

£275,000

DARLASTON
The Avenue

NEW

TRINITY PROPERTY are pleased to offer for sale a well presented and SPACIOUS second floor apartment having a communal entrance and staircase leading to the front door opening into an entrance hall, OPEN PLAN LOUNGE leading to the kitchen area, two bedrooms and a bathroom. Outside there is a PARKING SPACE. This is an ideal property for a first time purchase or INVESTMENT Viewing is essential! EPC - Ordered

£70,000

BILSTON
Lewis Street

NEW

Trinity Property are pleased to offer a superb fully extended traditional semi-detached property in Lower Gornal. Located close to ROBERT STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL, the generous accommodation consists of an entrance hall, lounge, sitting room, EXTENDED FITTED KITCHEN/DINER with central island, utility room, guest WC, Master bedroom with ENSUITE, three further bedrooms, a fitted family bathroom, driveway and garden to the front and a good sized rear garden. VIEWING IS ESSENTIAL. EPC - C

£70,000

LOWER GORNAL
Robert Street

SSTC IN ONE WEEK

TRINITY PROPERTY are pleased to offer a superb fully extended traditional semi-detached property in Lower Gornal. Located close to ROBERT STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL, the generous accommodation consists of an entrance hall, lounge, sitting room, EXTENDED FITTED KITCHEN/DINER with central island, utility room, guest WC, Master bedroom with ENSUITE, three further bedrooms, a fitted family bathroom, driveway and garden to the front and a good sized rear garden. VIEWING IS ESSENTIAL. EPC - C

£229,950

DUDLEY
Southgate Way

NEW

TRINITY PROPERTY are very pleased to offer for sale a well presented second floor apartment in a popular location. Having a communal entrance via intercom, hallway, kitchen/ lounge with fitted appliances, double bedroom leading onto a Jack and Jill style bathroom. Having an allocated parking space, this property is ideal for a first time buyer or investment opportunity. Viewing is a must! EPC - B

£70,000

WOMBOURNE
Maypole Court

NEW

TRINITY PROPERTY are pleased to offer for sale a superb first floor apartment located in WOMBOURNE VILLAGE CENTRE. Having an entrance hall, guest WC, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, spacious conservatory, MULTIPLE room/ garage/ workshop, master bedroom with walk in wardrobe and ENSUITE, three further bedrooms, family bathroom, SECURE off road parking and front and rear gardens. The property comes with security cameras and SOLAR PANELS. EPC - D

£127,950

TIPTON
Jubilee Road

NEW

TRINITY PROPERTY are pleased to offer for sale a versatile and EXTENDED spacious home. Having an entrance porch, guest WC, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, spacious conservatory, MULTIPLE room/ garage/ workshop, master bedroom with walk in wardrobe and ENSUITE, three further bedrooms, family bathroom, SECURE off road parking and front and rear gardens. The property comes with security cameras and SOLAR PANELS. EPC - D

£180,000

DUDLEY
Buffy Road

SSTC

A well presented and re-furnished end terrace property having an entrance hall, lounge, inner hall, guest WC, cellar, re-fitted kitchen, first floor landing, two bedrooms, family bathroom, garden to rear. Ideal first time purchase! Must be viewed. EPC - Ordered

£89,950

DUDLEY
Burton Road

SSTC IN ONE WEEK

A fantastic investment opportunity, this three bedroom traditional mid terrace property offers generous living space. With two reception rooms, kitchen and ground floor family bathroom and three bedrooms on the first floor. Also benefiting from local shops, restaurants, public transport and schools near by. This property must be seen to appreciate the accommodation. Book your viewing today EPC - Ordered

£69,950

KINGSWINFORD
Ashley Close

PROPERTY

A superb and very WELL PRESENTED semi detached property off Cot Lane, a desirable location in Kingswinford. Having an enclosed entrance porch, through hallway, dining room, SPACIOUS LOUNGE, first floor landing, THREE BEDROOMS and a shower room. Outside is a foregarden and a shared driveway leading to a DETACHED GARAGE and rear garden. Viewing comes highly recommended. EPC - Ordered

£189,950

DUDLEY
Scotts Green Close

NEW PRICE

Trinity Property are pleased to offer a DETACHED property in a corner position. Having an enclosed porch, entrance hall, lounge, SPACIOUS KITCHEN DINER, three bedrooms, re-fitted family bathroom, garage, good sized rear garden and generous parking to the front. Viewing comes highly recommended. EPC - Ordered

£175,000

DUDLEY
Ednam Road

TO LET

A fantastic opportunity to acquire newly converted stylish one and two bedroom apartments in this refurbished block. 1st & 2nd Floor Apartments available Now. Conveniently located in the town centre. Modern fitted kitchen and lounge area completed to a high standard, viewings are recommended to appreciate these spacious apartments. Stylish bathrooms, Central heating. No Dss, No pets. Prices start from £475 PCM • Fees. EPC C

From £475 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
St James's Road

TO LET

A recently refurbished stunning conversion which is located on the first floor and briefly comprises of open plan lounge/kitchen/ dining area, two good sized bedrooms. bathroom and plenty of storage. Easy walking distance to Dudley Town Centre. Viewing is highly recommended. No pets. No DSS. Available for long term rent. EPC - C

£525 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Aintree Way

TO LET

Situated on the popular MILKING BANK ESTATE. This spacious three bedroom DETACHED house briefly comprises of: entrance hall, lounge, dining room with patio doors to the rear garden, fitted kitchen and family bathroom. Front and rear gardens. Off road parking and single garage. Unfurnished, available for long term rental. No pets, no smokers, no DSS. EPC - D

£750 PCM & Fees

TIPTON
Dougherty Close

TO LET

Located near the local train station! This modern and well presented TWO bedroom apartment briefly comprising: Lounge, modern fitted kitchen, bathroom and allocated parking space. Call 01384 213395 for more information. EPC - D.

£525 PCM & Fees

BRIERLEY HILL
Milton Street

NEW PRICE

Very nicely presented two bedroom semi-detached house. With lounge, fitted kitchen/ dining area and a lovely rear garden. The bathroom has a mixer shower and is located on the 1st floor. There are two good size bedrooms. Unfurnished. No DSS. No pets. Available now to view. EPC - E

£500 PCM & Fees

BRIERLEY HILL
Bagleys Road

TO LET

A one bed first floor apartment in a popular residential area with off road parking. It has a good sized lounge with a fitted kitchen off, a double bedroom and a bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Unfurnished, available to view now for long term rental. EPC - C

£370 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Lingwood Hall

TO LET

LUXURY TWO BEDROOM FIRST FLOOR APARTMENT. Conveniently located, within walking distance to Dudley town centre. Briefly comprising: spacious lounge with dining area, modern fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, spacious bedrooms, master bedroom having en-suite and family bathroom. Gated secure allocated parking with intercom. No DSS. No pets. No smokers. Available NOW. EPC - E

£525 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Priory Street

TO LET

Located within the heart of Dudley this modern one bedroom apartment is located on the first floor and is close to all shops and transport links. The property is available unfurnished or possible part furnished. It briefly comprises of open plan lounge and kitchen, good sized bedroom and shower/wc. DSS considered with a guarantor & good references. EPC - C

£350 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Dingle Close

TO LET

Located in the popular Oakham area. This WELL PRESENTED three bedroom semi detached house is a MUST VIEW. Briefly comprising: entrance hall, lounge, dining room, modern fitted kitchen and family bathroom to the first floor. Outside the property has a good sized rear garden, driveway to the front and a garage. No DSS or pets. EPC - D

£650 PCM & Fees

LOWER GORNAL
Ruiton Street

NEW INSTRUCTION

A distinctive modern two bedroom 1st floor apartment in the popular Lower Gornal area having double glazing and central heating with secure off road parking to the rear of the building. Has lounge and fitted kitchen with bathroom/ WC with shower over the bath. Two good sized bedrooms. Unfurnished, no DSS, no pets. Available now. EPC - B

£535 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Westley Street

TO LET

A modern 3 bed family home, parking for 2 cars with garage, double glazed with central heating, 2 double bedrooms main with ensuite shower and 1 single room, plenty of storage, unfurnished, near to amenities. No DSS, EPC - C

£650 PCM & Fees

GORNAL
Summer Lane

TO LET

A two bedroom second floor apartment briefly comprising: entrance hall with stairs to en-suite floor, hallway with doors to good sized lounge, fitted kitchen, family bathroom, two good sized bedrooms, central heating, plenty of storage, unfurnished, available now for long term. Communal gardens, no pets. Viewing recommended EPC - E

£450 PCM & Fees

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High standards at specialist

The team at Dudley's independent Land Rover service and used sales specialists becoming used to seeing themselves on television.

Black Country 4x4 Ltd regularly appears on Big Centre TV, the local TV channel for Birmingham, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Solihull and The Black Country. The team takes part in a programme entitled 'LandRovers Live' with top triathlon star Sean Conway and will soon be featuring on the Discovery Channel, once again with Sean.

Black Country 4x4 Ltd regularly counts Sean amongst friends and customers.

The Zimbabwe-born British endurance swimmer, author and professional photographer is a passionately keen Land Rover owner and enthusiast who often relies on Black Country 4x4 Ltd to repair and maintain his vehicles.

Sean owns a Land Rover Defender and has recently purchased an original 1960's 'Landie' Series 2 from Black

Country 4x4 Ltd, which sells used Land Rovers as well as maintains them.

Black Country 4x4 Ltd, is a small but friendly independent Land Rover and Range Rover service, repair and used sales specialist based in Dudley. The technicians concentrate entirely on maintaining and repairing Land Rover products, and everything from vehicle recovery and servicing to major repair work can be provided along with complete engine and transmission rebuilds, refurbishment work and vehicle modification.

Customers can take advantage of Black Country 4x4's lower service and repair bills but still gain outstanding workmanship from a team of accomplished and committed Land Rover enthusiasts. There's a local vehicle recovery service, and with labour rates less than half the price found at most main dealers Black Country 4x4 has an excellent reputation for delivering good honest workmanship at highly competitive, value for money prices. Free inspections and winter checks can be provided, with these being performed in as little as 10 to 20 minutes.

In a recent development, the team now offers a tyre fitting service for owners of any make or model of car and light commercial vehicle. A vast range of tyres are available and any size of tyre can be quickly sourced if not in stock at the time of your visit.

Is your Land Rover ready to face the winter? Black Country 4x4 Ltd offers a weather protection service which is proving extremely popular.

As an Approved Bearmach Land Rover Parts Distributor, Black Country 4x4 Ltd also provides a full range of new and used Land Rover parts through its busy Parts Shop. Many parts are sent right around the world, in one case as far as the Amazon rain forest, where a Land Rover broke down and needed a rear differential as quickly as possible. It took a two-day trek on horseback to reach the vehicle, and Black Country 4x4 were the only people in the country that could help.

For more information or call 01384 484 853 or visit Black Country 4x4 Ltd, Unit B, Woodside Industrial Estate, Pedmore Road, Dudley DY2 0RL. A new website will be on the way soon.

Kadjar wins green award

Only two months after launching in the UK, the all-new Renault Kadjar is already picking up silverware, after collecting Best Crossover at the Next Green Car Awards.

The brand-new family-sized crossover won the environmental prize after overcoming opposition from rivals including the Fiat 500X 1.6 MultiJet II, Honda HR-V 1.6 i-DETEC and Mazda CX-3 1.5 Skyactiv-D. Kadjar was praised by judges thanks to its impressively low emissions of just 99g/km of CO₂ – joint best-in-class – and fuel economy of up to 74.3mpg on the combined cycle (NEDC).

Selection into the awards is driven by Next Green Car's unique NGC Rating which rates the environmental im-

act of all new cars on the market. This impact is considered alongside other factors including capability, suitability for purpose, impact on its sector and value for money to decide which models are shortlisted for an award.

Commenting on their decision to award the Renault Kadjar, the judges from Next Green Car said: "While it's taken some time for a new King of the Crossovers to arrive, Renault's All-New Kadjar easily takes the title. Efficient, comfortable, spacious and good value for money, the Kadjar raises the bar in the crossover segment."

Ken Ramirez, managing director, Renault UK said, "We're delighted that the judges from Next Green Car have chosen the All-New Kadjar as their Best Crossover, recognising our newest addition to the Renault family of cross-

overs, not only for its environmental credentials, but also for its practicality, comfort and value for money too."

Since it arrived in the UK in September, Kadjar has strengthened Renault's presence in the crossover market – building on the success of its compact crossover sibling, the Captur. It is already proving popular with the British car buyers thanks to its striking design, efficient powertrains, spacious interior, high levels of standard specification, best-in-class residual values and five-star Euro NCAP rating.

Kadjar is available with two diesel and one petrol, efficient yet powerful, engines in manual or automatic with two- or four-wheel drive and four trim levels. It is priced from £17,995 with a four-year warranty and Renault Assistance package as standard.



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Luxury on big wheels in 'palace'

By John Griffiths

If you're going to name your flagship car after a palace, you'd better be sure that it lives up to its billing.

Well you wouldn't expect great masters on the wall or the crown jewels, but SEAT's big seven seater does offer a taste of luxury on wheels.

Certainly it's been enough to win the Alhambra no less than 13 'best MPV' awards in Britain and now it's become even better. The second generation car first seen in 2010 has undergone a makeover: few major changes on the outside but a raft of upgrades to the interior, communications technology and safety, plus new and more efficient engines.

With prices from £24,885 to £35,770 it is competitively priced for luxury family transport, undercutting even some of its own cousins from the Audi VW Group.

The Alhambra is, by any standards, a big car: if you're now carrying passengers you can fold down the rear seats and load a staggering 2,300 litres of cargo on board (more than some vans). But whereas some early seven-seaters were actually derived from vans the Alhambra experience is in the upmarket saloon class. Only with more room.

That is one of the reasons SEAT has powered up the two turbo diesel options – the 'old' 140PS is replaced by a 150PS version, and the 177PS by a 184PS.

In this class of car boosting the horsepower, and torque isn't all about performance, it's about providing the power and torque to drive a relatively heavy vehicle more smoothly and quietly. In a word, refinement.

That was evident with the test car, a £34,840 SE Lux in . It was powered by the 184PS version of the two litre diesel, mated to the now familiar DSG six speed transmission – probably the smoothest, most responsive automatic on the market. If you're in the market for this type of car, the £1,300 extra cost of DSG over manual seems like money well spent.

There's plenty of performance but this combination makes progress particularly relaxed, and quiet. That upmarket saloon feeling again.

The new Alhambra also now come with a dynamic chassis control button, allowing you to set up the dampers for normal, comfort or sport mode, for a more supple ride or a more sporting response to steering input.

Best seller

The SE Lux specification, although it is near the top of the price range, proved to be one of the best-sellers in the previous range. That's perhaps an indication that customers appreciate the value for money compared to a less well equipped rival. As an alternative, there's a sports themed range-topper, the FR Line.

The Alhambra doesn't feel its size on the road, and can be hustled along winding b-roads with confidence. Sports suspension and a limited slip differential on the 184PS versions add to the dynamic competence of this top-powered model.

Official figures credit this top-powered version a fuel average of 53.3mpg and CO2 emissions of 139g/km (exactly the same as the manual). For the 150PS version, the figures are 0 to 62mph in 10.4 seconds, 55.4mpg and 132mpg.

The third engine option is new to the Alhambra. It's a 1.4 litre petrol, but thanks to the now well proven TSI technology it turns out an impressive 150PS of power and 250Nm of torque: enough to tackle the benchmark sprint in 10 seconds and average better than 42mpg (CO2 rating 150g/km).

A few years ago a 1,400cc petrol engine would have seemed ludicrous in a car like this, for which it would have been underpowered and uneconomical. But that was before TSI – a small capacity, turbocharged engine – which many manufacturers now emulate. You get 1.4 litre economy when the engine is cruising or on light loads, but the extra torque of a turbo when you need power for overtaking or tackling steep hills. Once again, it has the additional advantage of extra refinement in everyday driving.

On the outside, new LED tail lights, black high gloss B pillars, a new grille and new alloy wheels distinguish the facelifted Alhambra but it's inside where the biggest improvements have taken place. Practically hasn't changed, with the five split/fold down centre and third row seats. Wide opening, sliding rear doors make access to the rear easier.

The centre colour touchscreen now comes with a range of connectivity options likely to appeal to the business user and younger family members. There's even a new 'Connect' specification, illustrating a range of systems by which mobile phone apps can be fully integrated with the in car systems.

There's a new multi collision braking system, designed to prevent the car being shunted into further danger even if the driver has been temporarily incapacitated in a collision. As befits a car designed for families, additional safety systems take centre stage with blind spot monitoring joining the standard electronic stability control and other electronic wizardry such as parking assist and a driver fatigue warning.

It's not difficult to see why the Alhambra has become an awarded winner and this latest makeover will serve to keep it ahead of the pack.

It's roomy, refined, flexible and ideal for families, at a competitive price. The new, more efficient engines and the latest hi-tech connectivity options will make it even more of an attraction for business users.

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6 Property

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8 Motoring

cars over £1500

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FIAT GRANDE PUNTO, 08 reg, 1.2i, 5 door, 51,257 miles. Midnight blue. 6+ months MoT. Excellent condition for age. £2,000. 07508 610350.

FORD FIESTA ZETEC S 1.6 TDCI, 11 plate, 48k, (SH), frozen white. All extras. Immaculate throughout. £6,995. 07970 705466 (T) or P/V.

HONDA CRV EXI-VTECH 2007 reg, good condition, 89k, black, MoT, service history, top spec, any trial welcome, unleaded, £6,600. 07740 820154.

HONDA CRV-CITDI 2009, manual, EX model, MoT, FSH, Silver, 70K, £8,600. 07813 482125.

HYUNDAI ix35 GDi style, 2012 model, 1.6 engine, 5-dr, SUV, blue, full electrics, heated seats, voice command, EW, EN, 6 speed, manual, FSH, immaculate condition. £7,995. 7767 162387.

MAZDA 6 TACUYA 2.2 Diesel, 12 plate, 1 owner, MoT, only 16,000 miles, immaculate, half leather, £11,750. 01384 852702.

MINI COOPER

2006, 102,000 miles, cream, fsh, alarm, 11 months MoT, central locking, pac, alloys, lovely clean car inside and out.

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07870 884108.

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OLDFIELD AND SON VW Polo 1.6S 2007, Black finish: £2,495. Peugeot 307S, 2007, Black finish: £1,595. Vauxhall Zafira, 2005, Black, 7 Seater: £1,495. 07913 981460.

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FORD COUGAR V6 Manual, 1998, S Reg, silver, leather, full MoT, excellent condition. £750. 01902 847906.

Classified Ads

FORD FOCUS 1.8, 2003, private plate, 53,000 miles, long MoT, excellent condition, £1,150. o.n.o. 07411 99454

FORD FOCUS 1.8 With boot, 2002, immaculate, loads spent, well maintained, 10 months MoT £450. 07655 691074 / 01384 231465

FORD FOCUS Zetec Est Diesel, 2003 MoT Aug, 165k, good runner very reliable. Now reduced to only £650. 07929 637868. Wombourne

FORD KA 1.3 Engine, 2003 model, black, MoT, good condition. £395. 0744 209686

FORD KA 52 reg, new MoT, clean for its age, 89,000 miles, drives well, £395. 07494 075563

MINI COOPERS 52 reg, full MoT, very good condition, excellent runner, £1,350 ono. 0121 558 6223. 07712 737921

PEUGEOT 206 52 plate, MoT and service history, black, £300 ono. 01562 755211

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RENAULT CLIO EXPRESSION 1.5 Diesel, 2005, 106K, silver, 12 months MoT, low tax, excellent condition £1,095 ono. 07511 351657

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SUZUKI WAGON R 1.3 GL, 2001, MoT March 16, 85,000 miles, serviced, cam belt done, great little runner. £595 ono. 01902 897117

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BRYAN RONALD ROBERTS LATE OF DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS DIED THERE ON 4 OCTOBER 2014

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10 Personals

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personal

SINCERE, HONEST, DIVORCED GENT Early 50's, own home and car, wishes to meet lady, 40-55 for evenings out/in, holidays leading to a real LTR. Box Number P20155, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

WIDOWER 74 years young gentleman, fit and active, loves music and dancing, holidays in this country or abroad, many interests, well dressed, own house and car, very caring and loving to the right person.

Write Box No. P20158 (WS), Shropshire Newspapers Ltd, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

LOU, 45, lives in Shrewsbury, WLTM a lady between 42-49 with blue eyes, must be kind, caring and funny to mend my broken heart, someone who likes to curl up on the sofa for cozy nights in. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419855

FREYA 24yr old single mum, looking for male for free time frolics, call me if you're interested, it could be fun! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419851

WIDOW 50, blonde hair, GSOH. 5ft 5ins, slim, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 415767

FEMALE, dark haired 5'10, curvy, likes reading, walking, cinema, seeks male 40-50 for lasting relationship. Text only to Mailbox no: 5077545

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4294 Box 419673

PROFESSIONAL black female age 52, enjoys evenings and days out, would like to meet similar Midlands male. Text only to Mailbox no: 5315901

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call, ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 4299 Box 418167

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pls call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420073

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chaps any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 4291 Box: 409715

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home, ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4275 Box: 405297

MAGGIE, 72 yrs young, good sense of humour, presented, WLTM kind, sincere chappie to share coffee and a chat. Text only to Mailbox no: 5310040

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 4295 Box: 413399

LOUISE 35, dark hair, blue eyes, attractive ex air hostess, looking for fun times with older male for romantic nights in and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420043

LOUISE, pretty hairdresser, works long hours, finds it hard to meet a boyfriend, 34yrs, own flat. Text only to Mailbox no: 4192572

Women seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

39 yr old independent single Mom, knows the benefit of having a good man in the picture. Text only to Mailbox no: 5084796

JENNI, single mum seeks single dad, own home, can accommodate and loves spoiling her man. Text only to Mailbox no: 4115108

FRANCES, 45, busty female, loves nights in/out, seeking uncomplicated male who can occupy my free time for quality companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420003

FEMALE, seeks fun loving male who likes a drink and a laugh, to enjoy erotic experiences with a curvy brunette. Discretion guaranteed. Text only to Mailbox no: 5079311

MARY, pretty, friendly, lots of fun, lives in Kidderminster, loves the theatre, opera, ballet, WLTM a lovely, charming, funny, genuine guy, 30s, to settle down with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419883

personal

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Bright start is soon snuffed out for Tivs

Tivdale 1 Lincoln Utd 3
ONCE again Tivdale failed to make a bright spell last for the whole 90 minutes as they slumped to another Evo-Stik First Division South defeat.

Debutant Tivdale keeper Mihai Gherasim was called into action in the first minute to deny Ben Fairclough.

Robert Norris fired off target before Jack McGovern's cross was somehow turned wide by Tivdale's Jacob Barnes as the visitors pressed.

Tivdale responded and Tom Turton hit the bar before Chris Rabone was denied by Lincoln keeper Sam Vince.

The hosts made a perfect start to the second half when a Jason Chilton free-kick was stabbed home by Chris Sterling.

Malachi Farquharson wasted a chance to put Tivi 2-0 up and were made to pay when Nathan Whitehead cashed in on a slip by Gherasim to make it 1-1.

The goal seemed to deflate Tivdale and they fell behind when McGovern netted from close range and the victory was secured when a wind-assisted cross from Daniel Brookes sailed over Gherasim and into the net.

Gherasim made some amends for his error and he came to the rescue with two brilliant saves.

Lincoln made the game safe with 15 minutes to go with a bizarre looking goal.

The visitors then controlled the remainder of the game as Tivdale never put enough pressure on the Lincoln defence to get something out of the game.

The defeat leaves Tivdale bottom of the table.

First premier win still eludes Tipton squad

Tipton Town 0 Dudley Town 1
TIPTON Town are still searching for their first West Midlands Premier Division win of the season after slipping to a single goal defeat at home to Dudley Town.

Dudley bagged the all-important goal on 10 minutes when tricky winger Christian Ekwealo capitalized on a Tipton defensive error to fire home.

Tipton responded far better thereafter but the driving and rapidly swirling wind was the real winner, disrupting any pattern of play with it's sheer force and sudden vagaries and changes of direction.

Robbie Duffield came agonisingly near to salvaging a point for the hosts when his volley whistled just past the Dudley post with full-time just a couple of minutes away.

Terriers get their teeth into Blues

Blues 0 Huddersfield 2
BLUES slumped to yet another home defeat as lowly Huddersfield picked up a valuable three points with the victory at St Andrew's.

The hosts never recovered from a disastrous start when Joe Lolley gave the Terriers a shock lead after just 31 seconds.

Blues attempted to get back into the game – and out of their recent slump in fortunes following an outstanding start to the season – but an 83rd-minute goal from Nahki Wells settled the issue for the visitors.

Blues, with only one home win in their previous six games at home, were expected to be more positive. Instead they again started with only one striker, which played into the hands of Huddersfield as they exploited the situation and get the first three points for new manager David Wagner.

Huddersfield moved out of the relegation zone with the victory, only their fourth of the campaign.

The Terriers were bright and adventurous and certainly responded to the call from Wagner to adopt a more attacking style.

And they made a dream start after just 31 seconds when Blues were completely caught wrong-footed by the speed of Sean Scannell. His cross was cleverly allowed to go across the face of the goal by Wells to the unmarked Lolley, who converted the easiest of chances and put Blues immediately on the back foot.

It was a further 15 minutes before the home side were able put in a goalscoring attempt through Demarai Gray. Such was the confusion in Blues' defence, they were lucky not to concede a second goal.

Wells did the hard work with a low cross from the left which Jamie Paterson, only a few yards from goal, missed completely.

There was a similar incident in the following minute when Nicolai Brock-Madsen, operating as Blues' sole striker, narrowly missed a low cross by David Davis from a couple of yards.

Lolley wasted an even better chance just before the break.

Glassboys FA Cup hopes are shattered

Stourbridge 0 Eastleigh 2
STOURBRIDGE have now exited the FA Cup at the second-round stage in three of the last five seasons, but for Gary Hackett and his team this defeat hurt the most.

While ties against Stevenage in both 2011 and 2013 were approached in hope, the visit of Eastleigh to the War Memorial Ground was preceded with an air of optimism which, over the course of 90 minutes, did not prove to have been misplaced.

The Glassboys were at least the equals of their higher-ranked visitors, but were denied a first-ever appearance in round three by an inability to take their chances.

Most notably, top scorer Karl Hawley missed two glorious opportunities, first skying a finish over when clean through on goal with the game goalless and then, when his team trailed 2-0, seeing his penalty – which might have sparked a late rally – saved by visiting keeper Ross Flitney.

Yet there were numerous other occasions when crosses went fizzing around the visiting box, never dropping to anyone in a red and white shirt.

Sailing

The Spitfires, meanwhile, held their nerve in conditions more suited to sailing than football and when their chances arrived, snaffled them, taking the lead just before the hour-mark.

James Constable reacted quickest after Lewis Solly could only parry Joe Partington's header and then driving a stake through the heart of their hosts when Josh Payne doubled the advantage, 13 minutes from time.

The south coast club had themselves never reached the third round before and celebrated the achievement in the manner you might expect. Stourbridge, classy to the last, wished the victors well before no doubt reflecting on what might have been.

A clearly-crestfallen Hackett described his players as 'gutted', but when the dust settles they will surely realise there is no reason to be sad, after a Cup run which has featured numerous special moments and once again catapulted a club which only a dozen years ago survived on gates of 150 in the fifth tier of non-league into the



Chris Lait of Stourbridge battles with Joe Partington of Eastleigh during the FA Cup Second Round match

national consciousness.

The presence of the BBC's Football Focus programme, broadcast live from Amblecote, meant there was already a palpable air of excitement in the air long before kick-off.

Yet when the match did get under way, it was clear the hosts had not been distracted by the hype as they went toe-to-toe with Eastleigh, who had the advantage of the wind in the opening half.

Skipper Stuart Pierpoint had already brought a save from Flitney and Kristian Green seen a shot deflected over when Hawley's big chance arrived, eight minutes before the break.

Moments later, Constable pounced to put Eastleigh ahead and though Flitney's penalty save, after Hawley had been tripped by Will Evans, ended hopes of a comeback, the game felt lost the moment Payne fired home the second.

Spirits are high for Christmas push – Bath

WOLVES skipper Danny Bath says the squad's team spirit is better than it's ever been – as they plot a rise up the Championship table over Christmas.

Bath scored the winning goal as Wolves ended a run of four winless matches with a 2-1 victory over Rotherham on Saturday. In-form midfielder James Henry had set them on their way with an early header.

The much-needed victory lifted Wolves to 14th, five points off the play-off places.

It's been a struggle for consistency all season – but Bath insists the players have not wavered in their belief.

"There are people on the outside looking in thinking, 'there's probably this and that going on,'" Bath said.

"But in the dressing room we're as tight knit as we've ever been.

"Whatever's going on outside, we'll let that carry on and we'll focus on us and make sure those 11 lads out there are playing for each other and the club."

Wolves host Nottingham Forest and Leeds United in the next 10 days in two televised matches.

With the games coming thick and fast between now and early January, the captain stressed the importance of picking up as many points as possible.

"Every player will tell you the Christmas period can have a big impact on where you finish," he said.

"It only takes a few results over Christmas and we feel we've got that in us.

"There'll be no rest for us – it's about how we recover and do the basics right to get those results."

Villa side can't keep hold on lead at Saints

Southampton 1 Villa 1
VILLA'S winless run was extended to 14 matches as they failed to hold on at a Southampton side who entered the game on the back of three consecutive defeats.

Joleon Lescott gave the visitors an undeserved lead and exceptional opportunity with a goal in the first half, but they remain bottom of the Premier League after substitute Oriol Romeu secured a 1-1 draw.

After Wednesday's 6-1 Capital One Cup defeat at home to Liverpool, Saints manager Ronald Koeman had spoken of his team's lack of balance between defence and attack and his belief it may be necessary to alter their approach.

The manager retained their familiar 4-3-3 shape, only recalling fit-again captain Jose Fonte for Steven Caulker in central defence.

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Clegg will continue as a Heathen

MAX Clegg will stay in Cradley colours next season – and boss Will Pottinger has immediately challenged him to become the National League's top rider.

Clegg comes in on a 9.72 average and Pottinger is confident he can maintain that figure in what he feels will be the biggest year of his short career so far.

Pottinger, said: "I've got no doubts whatsoever that Max has got what it takes to be the National League's best rider.

"He's shown on numerous occasions what he is capable of and has contributed a high proportion of points in many of our team victories over the last few seasons.

"He did a very good job for us last year; I can't recall too many meetings where he didn't score double figures so he's definitely proved himself at this level but now he'd like to be the best.

"Max's average does take up quite a sizeable chunk of the team's points limit but at least we're safe in the knowledge that we've got an out-and-out No.1 who you can fully rely on as you know what you're going to get from him."

Meanwhile, Clegg himself is delighted to be lining up for the Heathens – particularly as they have moved back to Wolverhampton after a season at Birmingham.

He said: "I always wanted to be back with Cradley – even more so when I knew they were moving back to Monmore.

"It's a track I go well on and riding there every Monday with Wolverhampton in the Elite League as well should do me good. Racing in all three leagues, with Edinburgh in the Premier League as well, is going to be something new for me but I'm confident I'm going to have a really good year with all my teams."

TD grab a share of the points after losing the lead

Team Dudley 2 FC Stafford 2
FC Stafford made the second of their four consecutive away fixtures and matched the result from the previous week.

Stafford were without the service of Matt Bickley, Alex Barnfather, Matt Rhodes and George Kirkland from the previous week but we're able to recall Lee Melvin, Ryan Brown and Sam Waterfall to the squad.

The visitors had the first effort when Ben Smith saw his drive saved and then went close when Ryan Brown struck the post.

Dudley took the lead from a corner just before the break but Stafford were level in the second half when Smith hammered home.

Smith then fired Stafford in front from the penalty spot after Thomas Duffy had been fouled.

But Stafford's victory hopes were dashed when Nathan Jones fired in a fine free-kick.

The game opened up as fresh introductions for Dudley were accompanied by the arrival of Danny Clarke for Stafford.

Bragoli keeps Yeltz streak intact

Halesowen Town 1 Hyde United 1

DANNY Bragoli's late equaliser extended Halesowen's unbeaten league run to eight games.

Malcolm Melvin made a solid home debut and on-loan Kidderminster Harriers duo Reece Hales and Keyon Refell ended their two-month loan spell at the Yeltz.

Hyde enjoyed the backing of the wind in the first half and created the better chances, although Halesowen ended the half happy to keep Hyde's leading strike duo Scott Spencer and Ayrton Bevins – with 27 goals already to their name – relatively quiet.

Football

In early play Jordan Snodin's fourth minute free-kick flew straight into the arms of Shaun Rowley and Melvin touched a right-wing cross into the arms of Hyde goalkeeper Edward Wilczyński a minute later.

The visitors deservedly took the lead after 57 minutes when full-back Lee Neville blasted home on the edge of the six-yard box from Spencer's right-wing cross, following earlier good work from Bevins.

Halesowen had the benefit of the wind be-

hind them in the second half but only started to threaten late in the game.

The Yeltz made a double substitution and the change paid off seconds later with a 75th minute equaliser when Bragoli cleverly back-flicked home at the far post from just a yard out after a cleared corner was played back to Jean-Michel Gueyes in the danger area.

In a storming finish, Refell cut in from left with low shot after 85 minutes and Melvin charged down the ball a minute later before lobbing into the arms of Hyde goalkeeper Wilczyński.

In the last minute Wilczyński made a good blocking save from Gueyes at the far post.

KENNY RISKS FANS WRATH

Rotherham 1 Wolves 2

WOLVES boss Kenny Jackett opened himself up to ridicule by leaving out Benik Afobe from the away fixture of Rotherham at the weekend.

Pressure, while not from within the club, has been increasing steadily on Jackett for the past two months and could well snowball as the season continues into the new year.

After one win in eight matches he knew defeat at second-from-bottom Rotherham United would have seen the noisy minority, who think he can take Wolves no further, increase towards something approaching a majority.

Which, after what Jackett has already done for this club and what he's had to endure off the field this season (key players departing, injuries, contract issues, new signings not having an impact, a chairman who's upped sticks), is poppycock.

Throughout the rocky past few weeks and months Jackett has remained remarkably consistent in his stoic approach.

His level-headed demeanour goes some way to steadying the ship in the middle of the never-ending storm that is Wolverhampton Wanderers.

A couple of bad selection decisions, sure he's made some here and there, but there is no manager who doesn't.

Fashionably

And many were convinced he'd made another when the team sheets were delivered at 2pm on Saturday, with Twitter sent into what is fashionably described as a 'meltdown' by fans appalled that Afobe had been dropped.

The result justified Jackett's decision. While his replacement Adam Le Fondre wasn't the match-winner, that's hardly the point – Jackett picked an XI to win a football match, and that they did.

By temporarily banishing Afobe he has laid down a marker to the rest of his squad that no one is immune, no one is more important than the team, despite his market value.

While Afobe has scored at a steady rate (eight in 21 appearances) he hasn't been the Afobe of last season, and perhaps, as in the case of Kevin McDonald, being dropped will do him good..

DK runners extend lead at top



DK running club members who competed at Aldridge Airport

DUDLEY Kingswinford Running club extended their lead at the top of division three of the Birmingham & District Cross Country League with an unprecedented performance around the barren windswept fields of Aldridge Airport.

With club members filling the first three positions and having their first six, the A team counters, all back within the top 20 places it was a memorable day for the blue hoops.

With 21 runners pulling on the vest to compete not only did the club field quality but also quantity with everyone making a valuable contribution to shuffle other teams back a place or two.

Ben Foster claimed overall victory in 34.51 over a distance just shy of six miles, Rob Meredith was second in 35.07 and Matt Biggs claimed third place in 35.39.

James Wright was 8th in 37.23, Kevin Duckworth finished in 37.58 for 15th place and Daran Bishop completed the A team counters in 20th place in 38.21.

Dave Norman again led the B team home in 27th place in 39.01, Simon Hughes was 30th

in 39.05 and Stuart Perkins, making his club debut finished in 31st place in 39.12.

Rob Sannwald was 35th in 39.38, Andy Sprague was 45th in 40.22 and Simon Blizard was 52nd in 40.48 to complete the B team.

The B team would have placed fourth overall on the day just showing how much strength in depth DK could call on.

Daren Thompson finished in 41.27 to take 61st place, Kieran Pitt was 90th in 42.46, Graham Wildgoose was 95th in 43.04, Stephen Parr was 105th in 43.58, another debutant Sergej Lyubovnikov was 112th in 44.35, John Sixsmith was 123rd in 45.19, John Andrews was 142nd in 48.11 and Rory Campbell came 144th in 48.16.

Elsewhere the ladies travelled to Cofon Park, Birmingham for the West Midlands League.

Helen Tromans was first back for the club with Tracy Alderson, Carol Fisher, Sam Hemming, Lynn Sprague, Hannah McGuire, Karen Doy, Sally McConville, Jane Campbell, Jacqui Elson-Whitaker, Charlotte Tonks and Sarah Cox also competing.

Myhill well impressed by Lloris

ALBION keeper Boaz Myhill says Hugo Lloris's save to deny Jonas Olsson was the best he's ever seen.

Shocked that the Spurs fans behind him didn't applaud the Frenchman's match-saving intervention, Myhill reckons it was two points dropped for Albion rather than one gained.

Lloris denied Olsson from close range with roughly 15 minutes to go as the Baggies attempted to find a winner in an impressive second half performance.

"I think I've seen the best save I've ever seen in real life," said an obviously-impressed Myhill.

"You can't legislate for saves like that. I was stood in front of the Spurs fans and I'm half turning around going 'aren't you going to clap that?' because that's one of the best I've seen.

"They must not have been able to see that far up the pitch.

"It's a great save, unfortunately we couldn't get the win, but that's three unbeaten now which is brilliant."

Lloris made the save at 1-1 after James McClean's header had cancelled out Dele Alli's volley in the first half.

The ball travelled 50 yards before Alli volleyed it through Myhill's legs and the keeper said the swirling windy conditions made decision-making difficult.

"Warming up before the game I didn't know what was going on," said the Welsh stopper. "I was practising crosses and it was just a lottery, the ball was swinging around all over the shop and it just made it hard to read.

"From my point of view, I just waited for it to try and work out where it was going to go and obviously one of their players has gambled and latched on to it."

Apart from the goal, Myhill was only called into action by Mousa Dembele and Erik Lamela.

Grealish could be back in the fold

REMI GARDE has revealed Jack Grealish will return to training with Aston Villa's first team this week.

The talented Grealish had been forced to train with Villa's development squad as a punishment for being filmed in a Manchester nightclub hours after the 4-0 defeat at Everton and amid allegations he also partied at a Birmingham hotel the following day.

He again had no involvement in Saturday's 1-1 Premier League draw at Southampton.

But after he has played for the reserves, Gardewill again consider the 20-year-old for selection.

★★★

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